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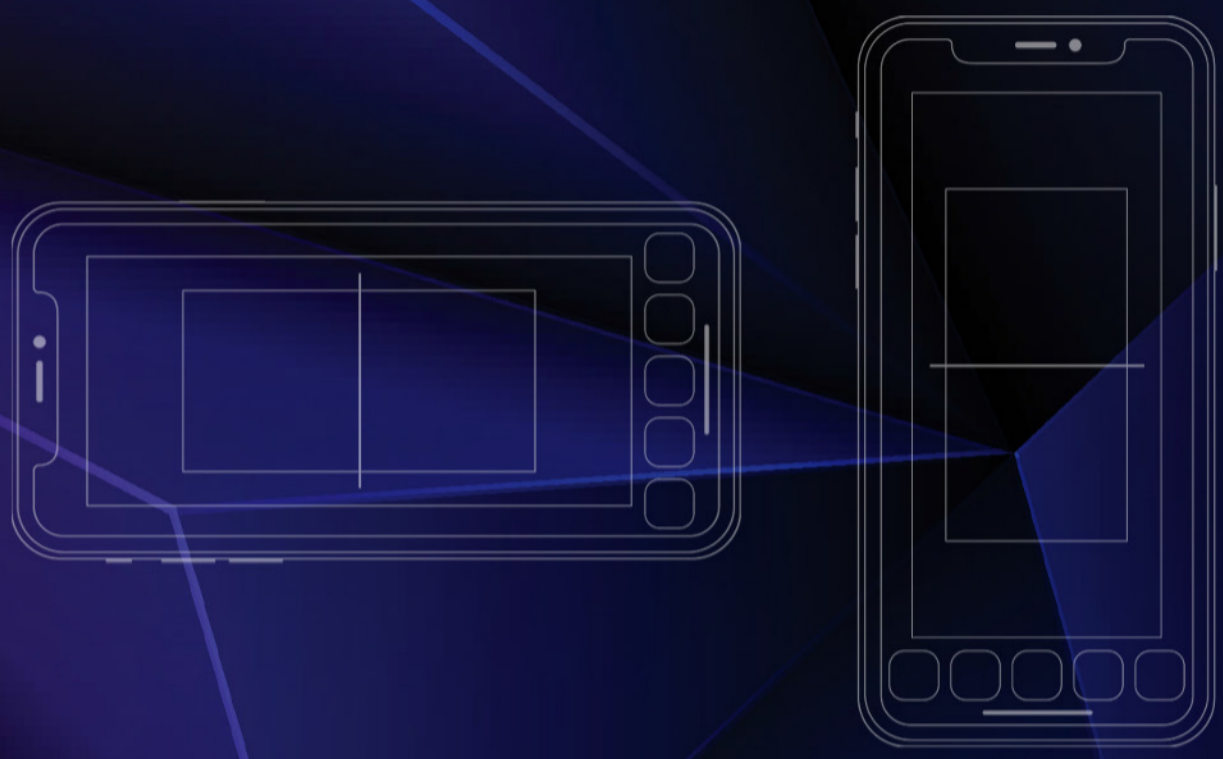

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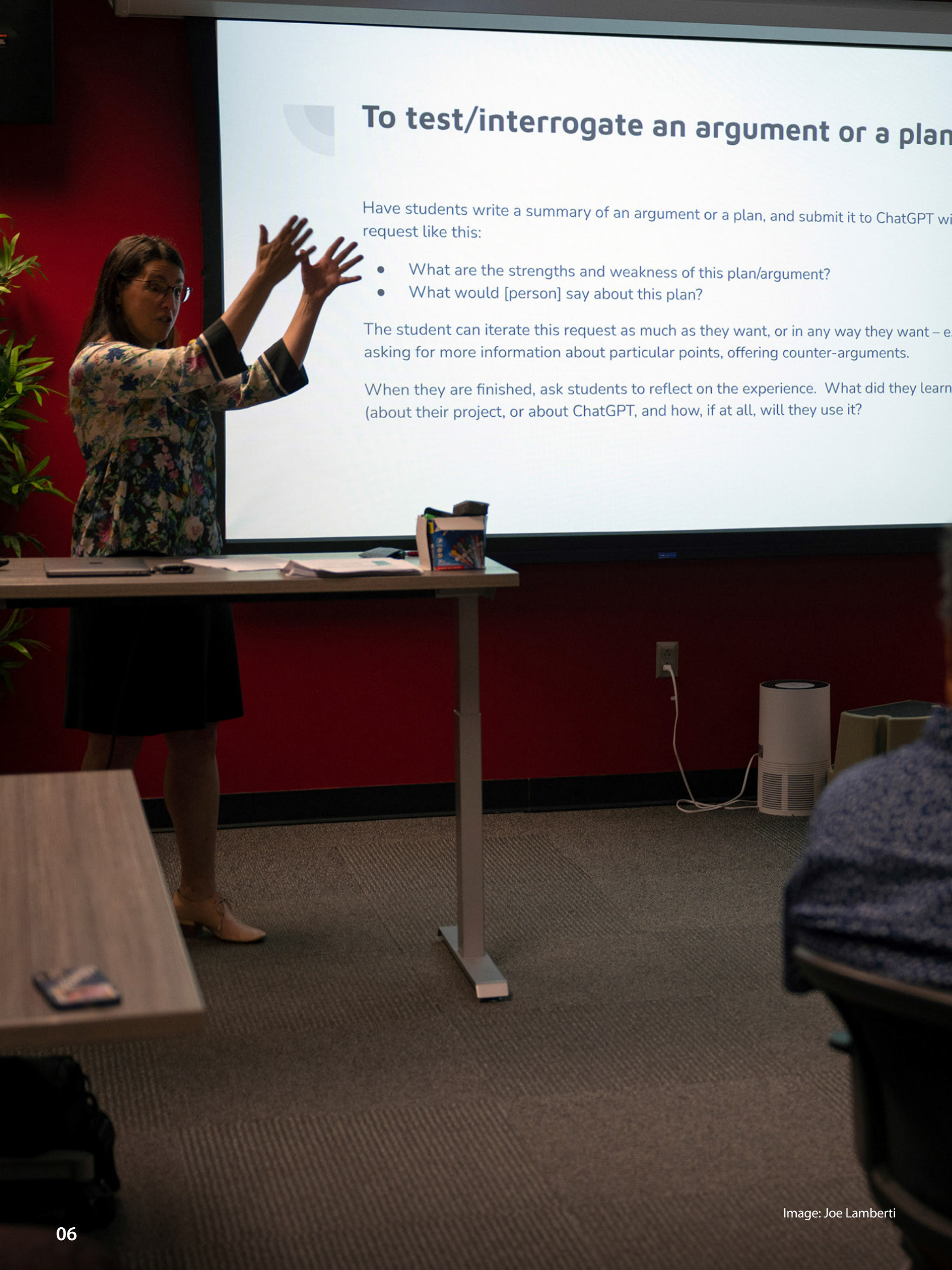


Image: Joe Lamberti

PAPER EXAMS, CHATBOT BANS: COLLEGES SEEK TO 'CHATGPT-PROOF' ASSIGNMENTS

When philosophy professor Darren Hick came across another case of cheating in his classroom at Furman University last semester, he posted an update to his followers on social media: "Aaaaand, I've caught my second ChatGPT plagiarist."

Friends and colleagues responded, some with wide-eyed emojis. Others expressed surprise.

"Only 2?! I've caught dozens," said Timothy Main, a writing professor at Conestoga College in Canada. "We're in full-on crisis mode."

Image: Jonathan Kemper

Introducing ChatGPT research release

Practically overnight, ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence chatbots have become the go-to source for cheating in college.

Now, educators are rethinking how they'll teach courses this fall from Writing 101 to computer science. Educators say they want to embrace the technology's potential to teach and learn in new ways, but when it comes to assessing students, they see a need to "ChatGPT-proof" test questions and assignments.

For some instructors that means a return to paper exams, after years of digital-only tests. Some professors will be requiring students to show editing history and drafts to prove their thought process. Other instructors are less concerned. Some students have always found ways to cheat, they say, and this is just the latest option.

An explosion of AI-generated chatbots including ChatGPT, which launched in November, has raised new questions for academics dedicated to making sure that students not only can get the right answer, but also understand how to do the work. Educators say there is agreement at least on some of the most pressing challenges.

ARE AI DETECTORS RELIABLE?

Not yet, says Stephanie Laggini Fiore, associate vice provost at Temple University. This summer, Fiore was part of a team at Temple that tested the detector used by Turnitin, a popular plagiarism detection service, and found it to be "incredibly inaccurate." It worked best at confirming human work, she said, but was spotty in identifying chatbot-generated text and least reliable with hybrid work.

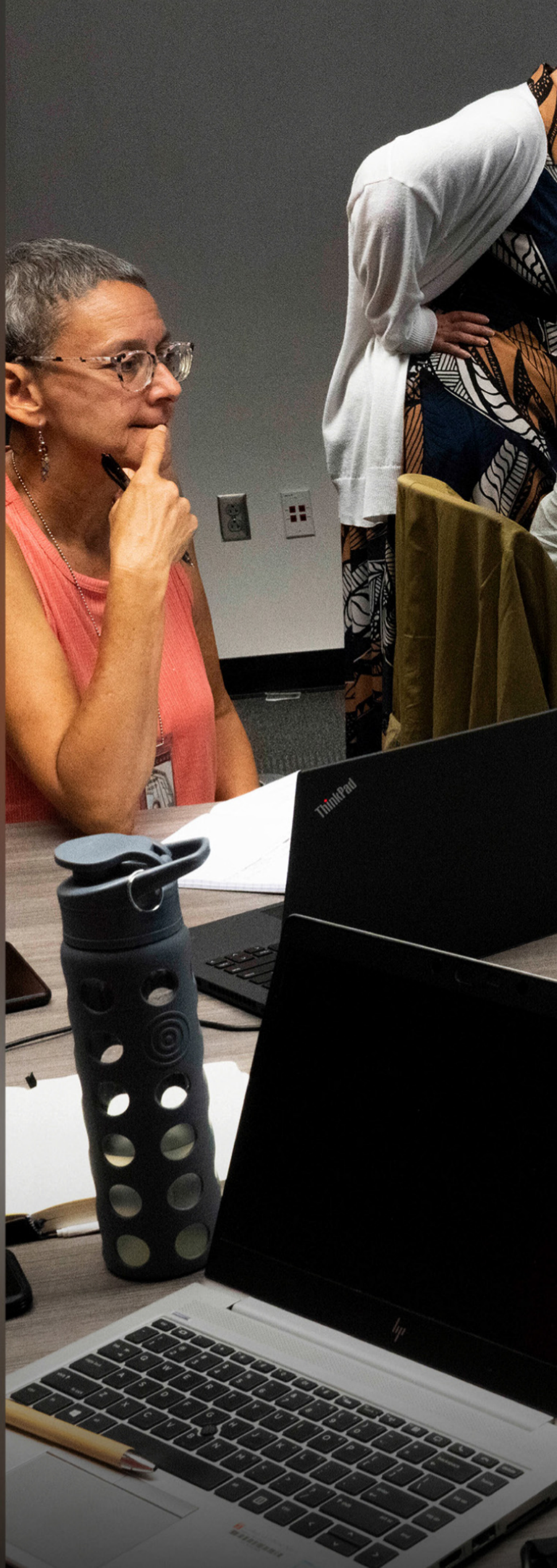


Image: Joe Lamberti

WILL STUDENTS GET FALSELY ACCUSED OF USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PLATFORMS TO CHEAT?

Absolutely. In one case last semester, a Texas A&M professor wrongly accused an entire class of using ChatGPT on final assignments. Most of the class was subsequently exonerated.

SO, HOW CAN EDUCATORS BE CERTAIN IF A STUDENT HAS USED AN AI-POWERED CHATBOT DISHONESTLY?

It's nearly impossible unless a student confesses, as both of Hicks' students did. Unlike old-school plagiarism where text matches the source it is lifted from, AI-generated text is unique each time. In some cases, the cheating is obvious, says Main, the writing professor, who has had students turn in assignments that were clearly cut-and-paste jobs. "I had answers come in that said, 'I am just an AI language model, I don't have an opinion on that,'" he said.

In his first-year required writing class last semester, Main logged 57 academic integrity issues, an explosion of academic dishonesty compared to about eight cases in each of the two prior semesters. AI cheating accounted for about half of them.

This fall, Main and colleagues are overhauling the school's required freshman writing course. Writing assignments will be more personalized to encourage students to write about their own experiences, opinions and perspectives. All assignments and the course syllabi will have strict rules forbidding the use of artificial intelligence.

College administrators have been encouraging instructors to make the ground rules clear.

Image: Joe Lamberti

Many institutions are leaving the decision to use chatbots or not in the classroom to instructors, said Hiroano Okahana, the head of the Education Futures Lab at the American Council on Education.

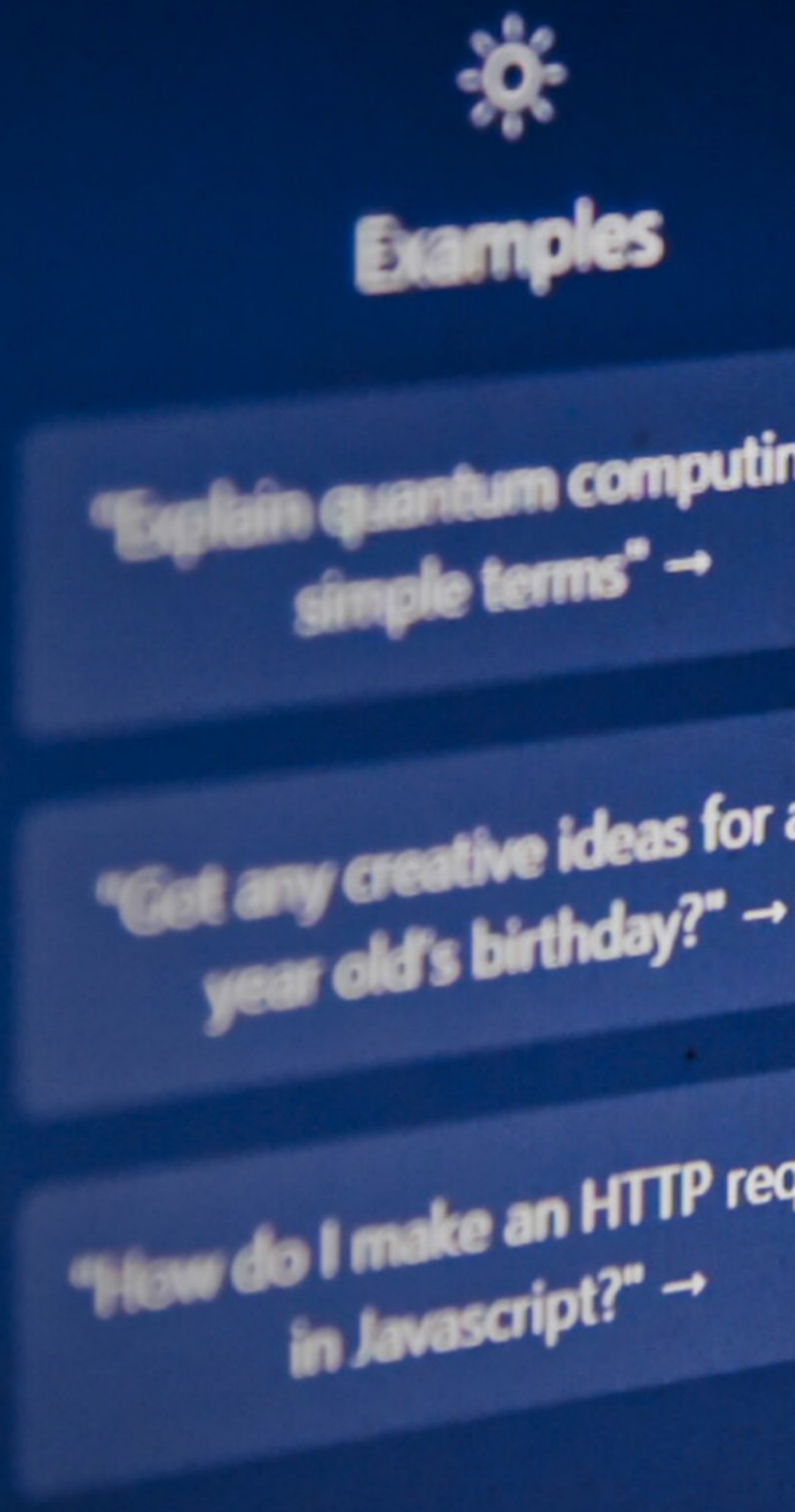
At Michigan State University, faculty are being given "a small library of statements" to choose from and modify as they see fit on syllabi, said Bill Hart-Davidson, associate dean in MSU's College of Arts and Letters who is leading AI workshops for faculty to help shape new assignments and policy.

"Asking students questions like, 'Tell me in three sentences what is the Krebs cycle in chemistry?' That's not going to work anymore, because ChatGPT will spit out a perfectly fine answer to that question," said Hart-Davidson, who suggests asking questions differently. For example, give a description that has errors and ask students to point them out.

Evidence is piling up that chatbots have changed study habits and how students seek information.

Chegg Inc., an online company that offers homework help and has been cited in numerous cheating cases, said in May its shares had tumbled nearly 50% in the first quarter of 2023 because of a spike in student usage of ChatGPT, according to Chegg CEO Dan Rosensweig. He said students who normally pay for Chegg's service were now using the AI platform for free.

At Temple this spring, the use of research tools like library databases declined notably following the emergence of chatbots, said Joe Lucia, the university's dean of libraries.



ChatGPT
Capabilities
Limitations
Remembers what user said earlier in the conversation
Allows user to provide follow-up corrections
Trained to decline inappropriate requests

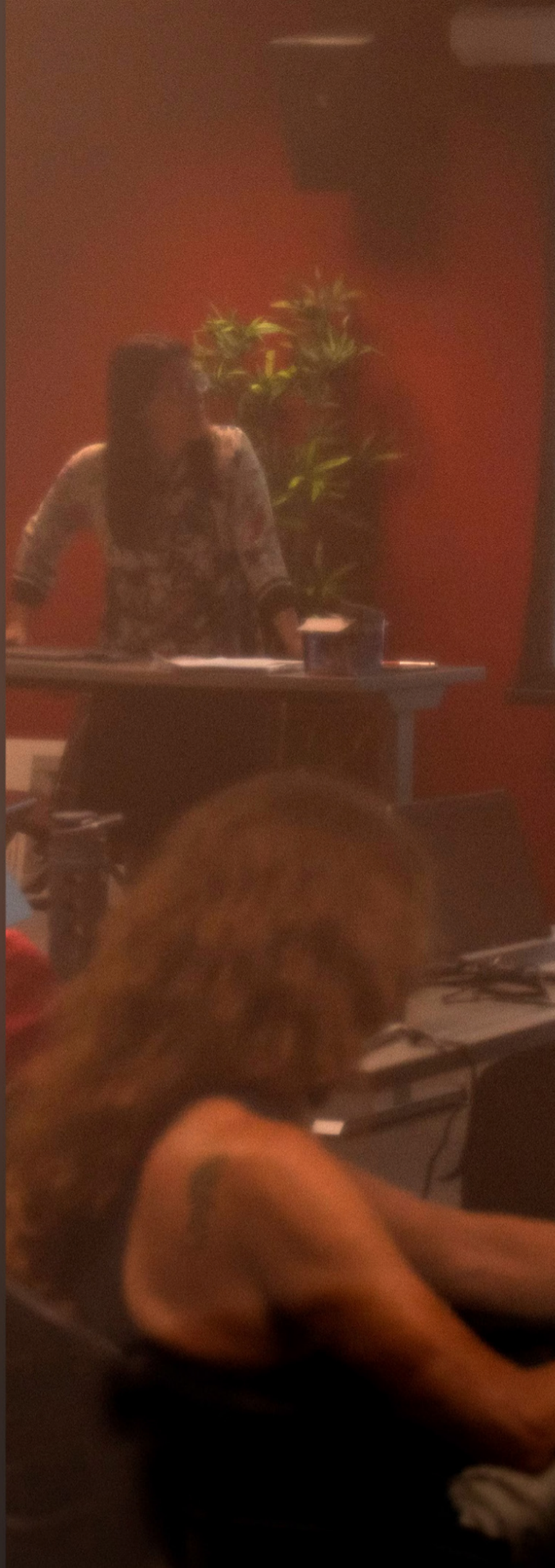
"It seemed like students were seeing this as a quick way of finding information that didn't require the effort or time that it takes to go to a dedicated resource and work with it," he said.

Shortcuts like that are a concern partly because chatbots are prone to making things up, a glitch known as "hallucination." Developers say they are working to make their platforms more reliable but it's unclear when or if that will happen. Educators also worry about what students lose by skipping steps.

"There is going to be a big shift back to paper-based tests," said Bonnie MacKellar, a computer science professor at St. John's University in New York City. The discipline already had a "massive plagiarism problem" with students borrowing computer code from friends or cribbing it from the internet, said MacKellar. She worries intro-level students taking AI shortcuts are cheating themselves out of skills needed for upper-level classes.

"I hear colleagues in humanities courses saying the same thing: It's back to the blue books," MacKellar said. In addition to requiring students in her intro courses to handwrite their code, the paper exams will count for a higher percentage of the grade this fall, she said.

Ronan Takizawa, a sophomore at Colorado College, has never heard of a blue book. As a computer science major, that feels to him like going backward, but he agrees it would force students to learn the material. "Most students aren't disciplined enough to not use ChatGPT," he said. Paper exams "would really force you to understand and learn the concepts."



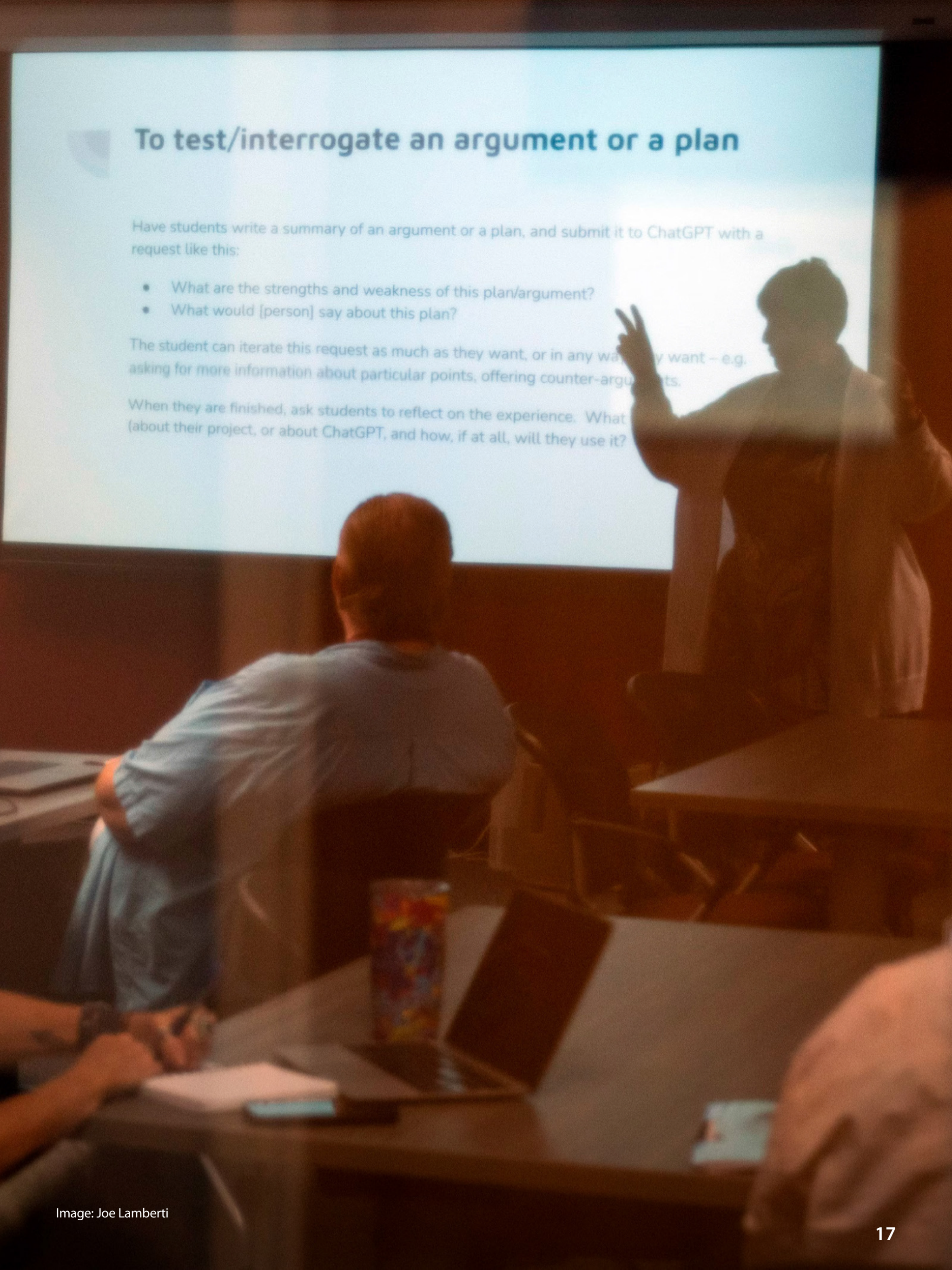


Image: Joe Lamberti

Cut
Copy

Takizawa said students are at times confused about when it's OK to use AI and when it's cheating. Using ChatGPT to help with certain homework like summarizing reading seems no different from going to YouTube or other sites that students have used for years, he said.

Other students say the arrival of ChatGPT has made them paranoid about being accused of cheating when they haven't.

Arizona State University sophomore Nathan LeVang says he doublechecks all assignments now by running them through an AI detector.

For one 2,000-word essay, the detector flagged certain paragraphs as "22% written by a human, with mostly AI voicing."

"I was like, 'That is definitely not true because I just sat here and wrote it word for word,'" LeVang said. But he rewrote those paragraphs anyway. "If it takes me 10 minutes after I write my essay to make sure everything checks out, that's fine. It's extra work, but I think that's the reality we live in."

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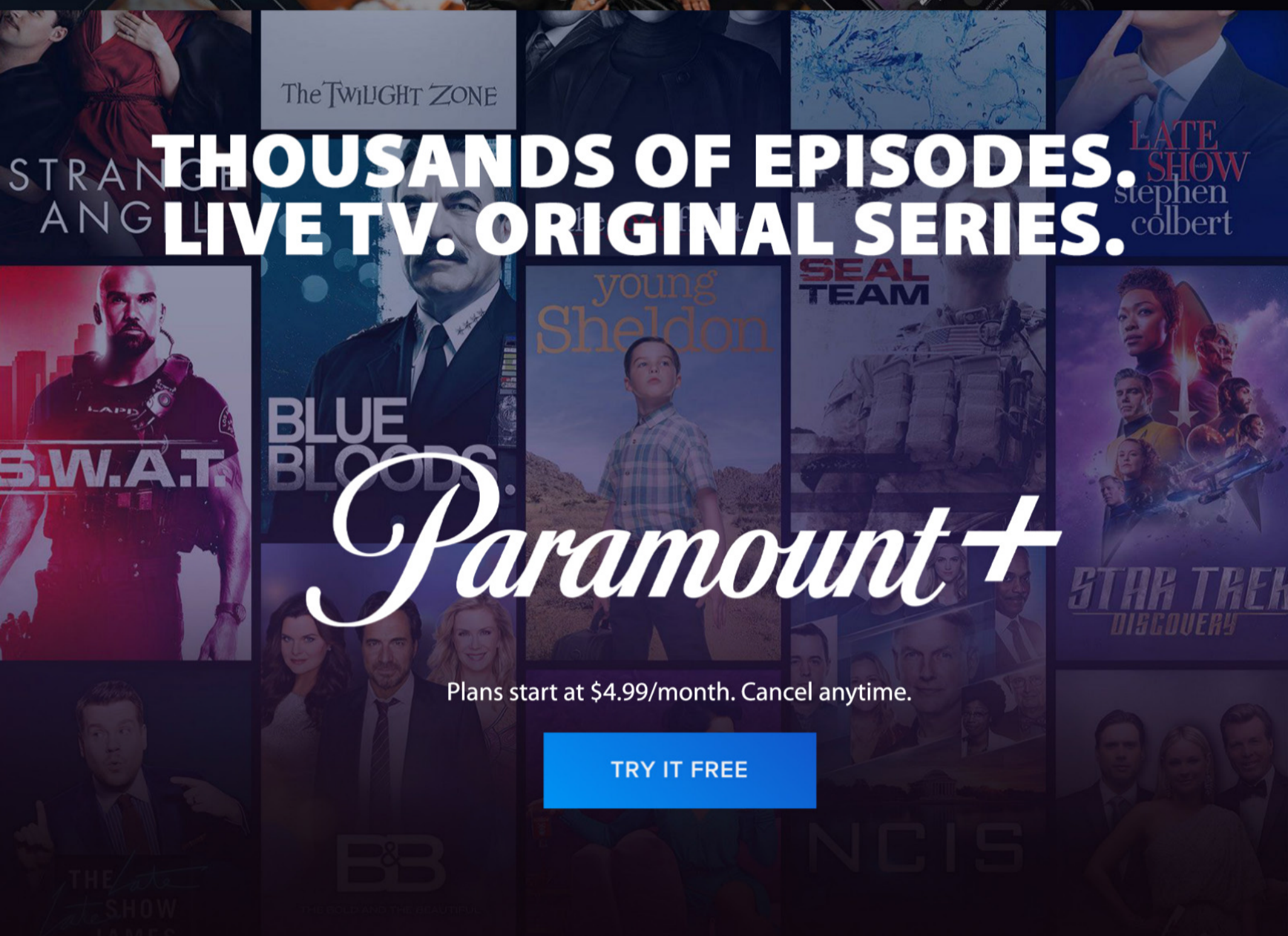

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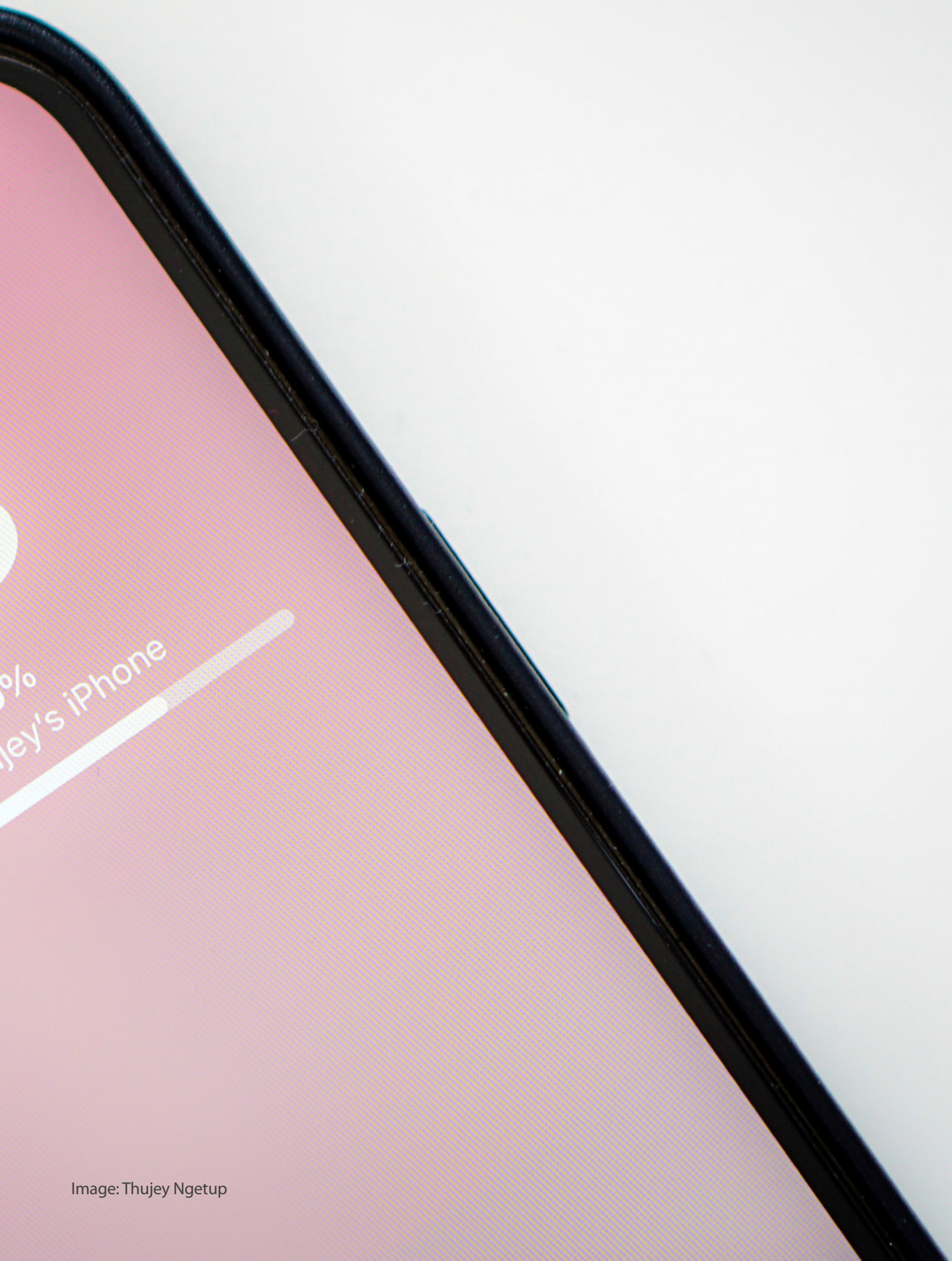
THE END-CALL BUTTON ON YOUR IPHONE COULD MOVE SOON. WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT APPLE'S IOS 17 CHANGE



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Hanging up that phone call? The location of Apple's red end-call button is set to slightly move with upcoming iOS 17 updates to the phone app, so be wary of your thumb's muscle memory.

As iPhone users know, the "End" button currently sits prominently away from other call options, in a center position towards the bottom of the screen. But with iOS 17, which officially launches this fall, the red icon will move the right — and other features will move down to join it.

While a iOS 17 preview guide from Apple showed this new setup in June, renewed attention has increased as some explore beta versions of the software upgrade. Images from iOS 17 beta versions shared by multiple news outlets this week show the small — but potentially frustrating — change.

17

Image: James Yarema

Image: Quinn Battick

Beyond the end button, there are additional changes to the placement of other call features seen on past iOS versions. The "Mute" and "Speaker" buttons, for example, have swapped — as have the "FaceTime" and "Keyboard" options. And it appears the feature allowing you to search for contacts has merged with the add call option.

The changes have already received reactions on social media, where some predict having some muscle memory errors — noting it could take some time to adjust.

It's unclear if the call functions will change further before iOS 17 officially rolls out.

As Apple notes on its website, the company's beta program allows some Apple users to test out software before it's released. Feedback from participants helps Apple identify issues and improve software programs before they're commercially released.

Beyond potential tweaks to call icon locations, iOS 17 is set to bring an array of new features to Apple customers — including improved autocorrect, a new journal app and live voicemail transcription with the ability to pick up and answer as someone is leaving a message.

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TWITTER-TURNED-X CEO LINDA YACCARINO FOCUSES ON WINNING BACK BIG BRANDS ON ELON MUSK'S PLATFORM

The new CEO of the company formerly known as Twitter says she's spent much of the past eight weeks trying to get big brands back and advertising on the social media platform that's been in upheaval since it was bought last year by Elon Musk.

X Corp. CEO Linda Yaccarino said Thursday on CNBC that she has been focused on talking with brands like Coca Cola, Visa and State Farm, along with their chief marketing officers and chief executives.

A number of companies had pulled back on ad spending — the platform's chief source of revenue — over concerns that Musk's thinning of content restrictions was enabling hateful and toxic speech to flourish.

"I've lived on a lot of planes lately, direct conversations with CMOs and CEOs, and we cover a lot of ground and I focus on those that have either maybe paused or reduced spending to remind them about the power of the platform and the power of the user base and the economic potential of them partnering with us again," she said in her first media interview since Musk appointed her as CEO.

Yaccarino suggested that part of the difficulty is that some big advertisers might not have known who to talk to because the company has slashed its staff from about 8,000 workers to 1,500 since Musk's takeover. She also said she's been working to assure advertisers that brand safety initiatives tailored to them will make sure that their ads will "only air next to" content that's appropriate to them.

She said the platform is balancing Musk's free-speech vision with techniques that, while not removing many toxic posts, are supposed to make it hard for them to surface to most users.

"If it is lawful, but it's awful, it's extraordinarily difficult to see it," Yaccarino said.

The former NBCUniversal executive said her role under Musk — who's also the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX — is clearly defined.

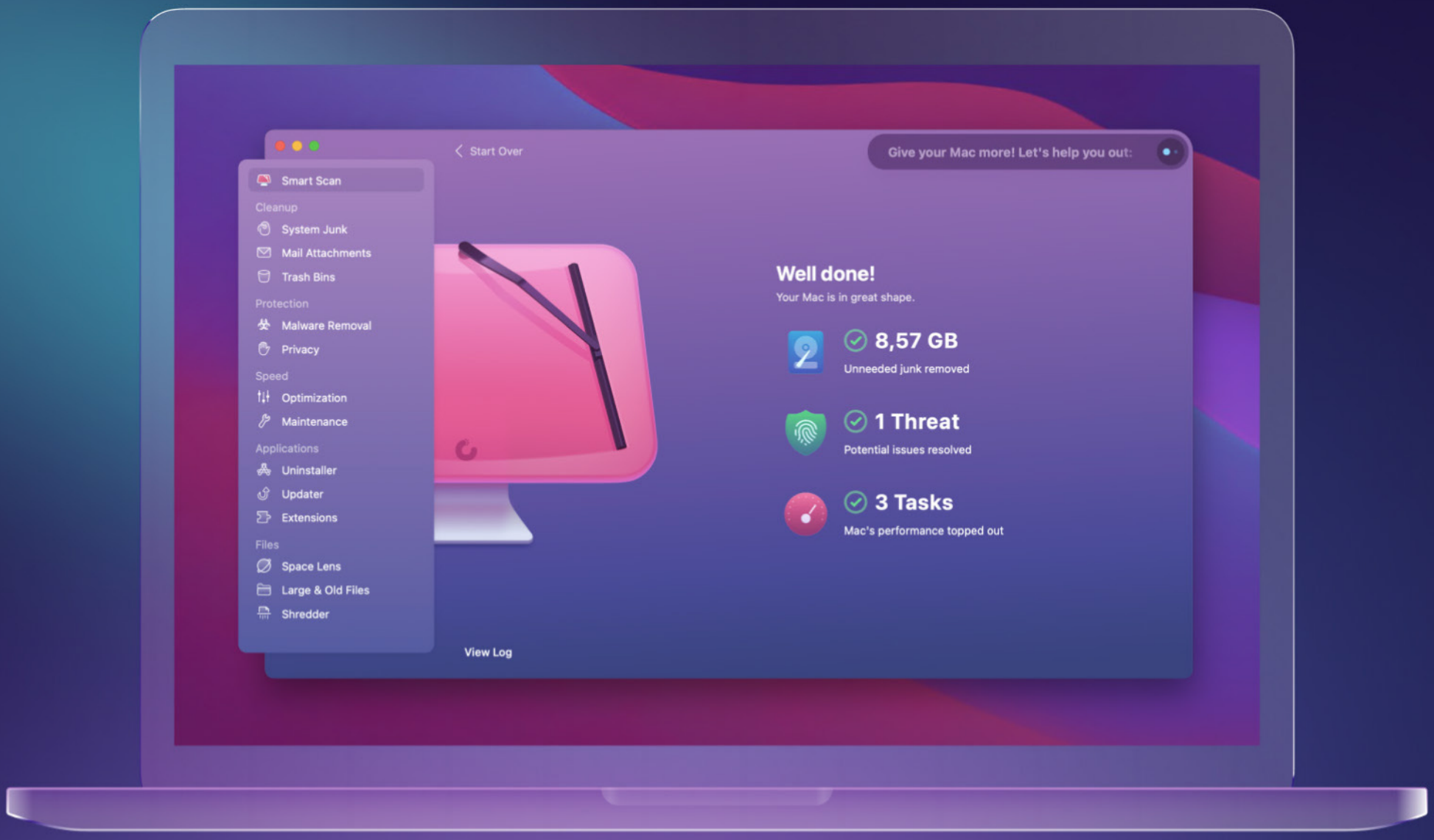
"Elon focuses on product design. He leads a team of extraordinary engineers and focuses on new technology," she said. "So think about it as Elon is working on accelerating the rebrand and working on the future. And I'm responsible for the rest. Running the company from partnerships to legal to sales to finance, all the things."

She said she has autonomy in doing that and described it as like a relay race.

"Elon works on the technology, dreams up what's next, passes the baton to me. I bring it to market for economic prosperity, not only for our company, but for all of our customers, like our advertising partners," she said.

Yaccarino said she's paying close attention to Meta's new Twitter competitor, Threads.

After the initial hype that brought a surge of users to Threads, "it's dropped off dramatically but you can never, ever take your eye off any competition because they'll continue iterating," she said.



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DISNEY TO BOOST PRICES FOR AD-FREE DISNEY+ AND HULU SERVICES AND VOWS CRACKDOWN ON PASSWORD SHARING

Disney
Company

Walt Disney Co. CEO Bob Iger vowed to make its streaming services profitable via a planned October price hike on its ad-free Disney+ and Hulu plans and a crackdown on password sharing expected to extend through next year.

The increases will raise the monthly cost of ad-free Disney+ by $3, or roughly 27%, to almost $14. The cost of ad-free Hulu will likewise rise $3 to almost $18 — a 20% hike that will make it more expensive than the most popular ad-free tier at Netflix.

Iger spoke following Disney's release of mixed earnings for its fiscal third quarter ended July 1. The company reported a substantial net loss while shedding customers in both domestic and international markets. Overall, Disney reported a 4% increase in revenue for the quarter but swung to a net loss of $460 million from a year-earlier profit of $1.4 billion. Disney shares, which closed at $87.49, rose roughly 2.2% to $89.45 after the announcement.

While Disney reported narrower losses on Disney+ in the quarter, the service lost domestic subscribers in the U.S. and Canada for the second straight quarter. Internationally, it racked up its third straight quarter of declines, although issues in the Indian market played a large role there.

The service had 146.1 million international customers in its third quarter, a 7.4% decline from the 157.8 million it reported in the second quarter. That followed a loss of 4 million streaming subscribers in the second quarter. Domestically, it shed 300,000 subscribers in the third quarter, the same number it lost in the second quarter.

The Disney CEO acknowledged that the price hikes are intended to steer consumers toward

cheaper ad-supported versions of these services, whose subscription prices are not changing. The advertising market for streaming is "picking up," he said, noting that it's healthier than traditional TV ads. "We're obviously trying with our pricing strategy to migrate more subs to the advertising supported tier."

Iger didn't provide details about the password-sharing crackdown beyond saying that Disney could reap some benefits in 2024, although he added that the work "might not be completed" that year and that Disney couldn't predict how many password sharers would switch to paid subscriptions.

Some analysts doubted whether price hikes and getting tough on password sharers can do much to lead Disney back to sustainable growth. Paul Verna, an analyst with Insider Intelligence, said in a note that the company's moves aren't likely to calm investors "anxious for clarity on the company's strategy for its streaming services and TV networks."

While a narrowing in Disney's streaming losses is heartening, he argued, the improvements owed more to dramatic cost-cutting than organic growth, suggesting that Iger still doesn't have a plan for putting Disney on a sound footing.

Disney is in the middle of a " strategic reorganization " that includes cutting about 7,000 jobs to help save $5.5 billion across the company.

Iger, who returned in November to take over the CEO post from Bob Chapek, has worked over the past several months to turn around Disney's streaming business while making sure that the financial might of its theme parks doesn't waver.

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Disney's theme parks are widely viewed by industry experts as a critical component of the Burbank, California-based company's business. To that end, Iger has prioritized reconnecting with the Disney theme park die-hards and restoring their faith in the brand. Shortly after Iger's return, changes rolled out at U.S. parks.

He's also had to contend with trying to protect Disney World's theme park district from a takeover by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. Disney sued DeSantis in late April, alleging the governor waged a "targeted campaign of government retaliation" after the company opposed a law critics call " Don't Say Gay." This month a group of mostly Republican former high-level government officials called the Florida governor's takeover of Disney World's governing district "severely damaging to the political, social, and economic fabric of the State."

Disney announced last month that Iger will remain as CEO of The Walt Disney Co. through the end of 2026, agreeing to a two-year contract extension that will give the entertainment and theme park company some breathing room to find his successor.

This week, Disney-owned ESPN announced that it struck a lucrative deal to rebrand an existing sports-betting app owned by Penn Entertainment as ESPN Bet. Penn Entertainment is paying $1.5 billion plus other considerations for exclusive rights to the ESPN name and will continue to own and operate the betting app.

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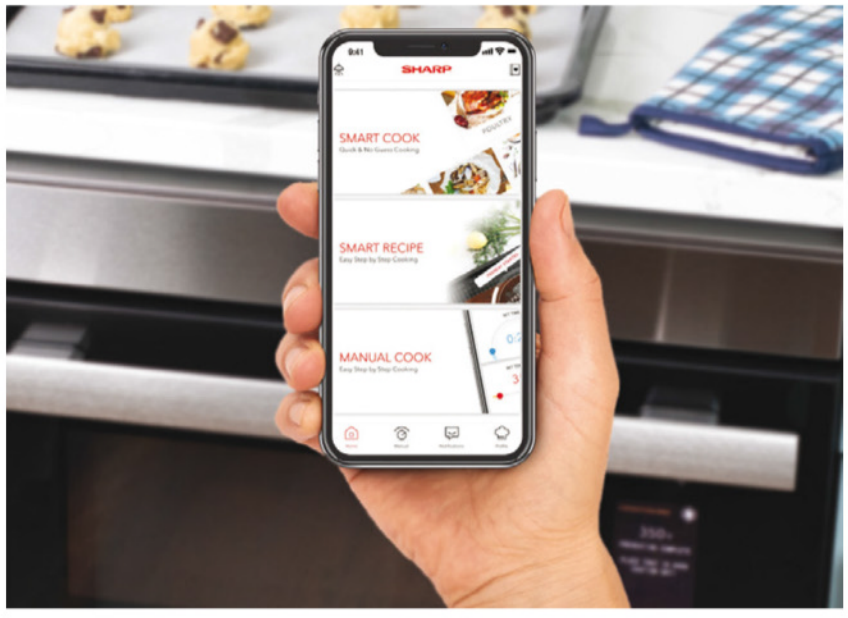

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MORE PEOPLE ARE OPTING FOR EARLY DINNERS SINCE THE PANDEMIC, SAYS OPENTABLE CEO DEBBY SOO

When OpenTable CEO Debby Soo joined the restaurant reservation company in 2020, the industry was struggling through the pandemic.

"It was all hands on deck and 'How do we help restaurants keep afloat?'" she said. "It was a very intense period, but it was also a very clear period. That was what the whole company was focused on doing."

These days, she is focused on growing the 25-year-old company, which was acquired by Amsterdam-based Booking Holdings in 2014. OpenTable manages reservations for 55,000 restaurants worldwide and seats more than 1 billion diners per year.

In 2021, OpenTable launched "Experiences," which lets diners book special offerings like wine tastings or cooking classes. Last year, it partnered with inline, a Taiwan-based restaurant software provider, to expand its presence in Asia. And in March it joined with ChatGPT to give automated restaurant recommendations to the chatbot's users.

Soo spoke recently about OpenTable and the restaurant industry. Her answers have been edited for length and clarity.

WHAT ARE SOME DINING TRENDS THAT HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE PANDEMIC?

There was this surge of early dinner dining during the pandemic that has largely carried out even after the pandemic. That 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. slot is quite popular, whereas before the 7 p.m. slot was really the most coveted. I think there's something at play here with work and working in an office. Before it was Monday through Friday, you were in the office, you would leave

Image: Ibrahim Boran

at 5:30. Now maybe maybe you're fully remote and you've been in your apartment or your house for a whole day and you can't wait for the opportunity to get dressed to go out. We're also seeing diner behavior shift to online, meaning when you're thinking of dining out, instead of walking in or phoning, you're going online and trying to book a reservation that way.

WHAT ABOUT DINING HAS STAYED CONSTANT?

A. Even after the pandemic, when dining demand has largely returned, it's still really hard to do what restaurateurs do. Labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, the economic uncertainty. It's very hard to run a restaurant. And I don't think that's something that has changed.

HOW WILL OPENTABLE CONTINUE TO GROW?

There are a couple levers we can pull.
One is international expansion. The inline partnership is a good example. They are a table management system; we've partnered with them to create a consumer layer, so Taiwan has full access to our diner app and you can book directly on OpenTable with inline restaurants. So that's one way. Another way is to go in with sales people, sign up restaurants and build the diner demand. We can also go into different segments of the market. OpenTable right now is primarily for restaurants that take reservations. Could there be a day when we went into restaurants who have waitlist only? To be honest, as the CEO, I feel really bullish about all of those opportunities.

Image: Thomas Park

RESTAURANTS HAVE TO INTEGRATE AN INCREASING AMOUNT OF TECHNOLOGY. DO YOU GET ANY PUSHBACK FROM THEM?

Any given restaurant contends with about 12 to 15 pieces of discrete software or technology. The various takeout apps and delivery apps, their point of sale, their front of house reservation system, payroll, inventory management. The list can go on. We generally don't hear restaurants pushing back. We help them run their front-of-house operations much more efficiently. We do everything in our power to make sure that we're connecting with different pieces of software and make it as easy as we can for our restaurant partners.

Image: Samuel Oakes

YOU CAME TO OPENTABLE FROM THE TRAVEL SITE KAYAK. HOW DID YOU MANAGE THE TRANSITION TO A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT INDUSTRY?

There was definitely a pretty steep learning curve. We have so many people at the company who come from hospitality, who have worked in restaurants their whole lives, who have a deep passion for the industry. And so anything I didn't know was very quickly and easily answered by the folks I worked with. It's a very different, more complex business. My partners used to be United Airlines and Delta, and there weren't many of them. Here restaurants are my partners, and we have 55,000 of them. But I would say the one thing that wasn't hard to learn was that ethos that the hospitality industry has. My parents own a small business, so when you see what restaurateurs are doing, they're contending with what small business owners and entrepreneurs deal with all the time. And so in that way, it's really inspiring for me because we're helping those types of businesses thrive.

Image: Jack Finnigan

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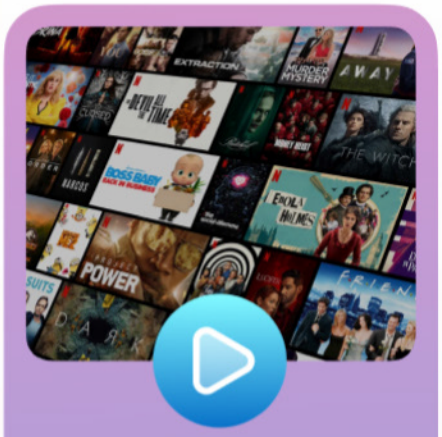

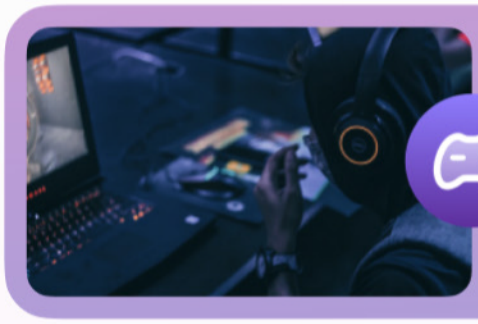

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RECALLING A WILD RIDE WITH A ROBOTAXI NAMED PEACHES AS REGULATORS MULL SAN FRANCISCO EXPANSION PLAN

I won't forget the first time I took a ride in a car without anyone sitting in the driver's seat.

It happened one night last September when a Chevy Bolt named Peaches picked me up outside a San Francisco bar. Our ensuing half-hour ride together produced, at first, a titillating display of technology's promise. Then an unexpected twist made me worry that the encounter had turned into a mistake I would regret.

Peaches and I were getting along great for most of our time together, as the car deftly navigated through hilly San Francisco streets similar to those Steve McQueen careened through during the famous chase scene in the 1968 film "Bullitt." Unlike McQueen, Peaches never exceeded 30 mph (48 kph) because of restrictions imposed by state regulators on a ride-hailing service operated by Cruise, a General Motors subsidiary, since it won approval to transport fare-paying passengers last year.

It was all going so smoothly that I was starting to buy into the vision of Cruise and Waymo, a self-driving car pioneer spun off from a Google project that is also trying launch a ride-hailing service in San Francisco.

The theory fueling the ambition is that driverless cars will be safer than vehicles operated by frequently distracted and occasionally intoxicated humans — and, in the case of robotaxis, be less expensive and more convenient to ride in than automobiles that require a human behind the wheel.

The concept does sound good. And the technology to pull it off is advancing steadily, just like other artificial intelligence applications such as chatbots that can write college-level

cruise
SF COVID-19
DELIVERY
RESPONSE

Image: Michael Liedtke

essays and produce impressive pieces of art within seconds.

But when something goes awry, as it did near the end of my encounter with Peaches, that sense of astonishment and delight can evaporate very quickly.

And even though none of the Cruise and Waymo driverless vehicles have been involved in major accidents in San Francisco, the robotaxis have been malfunctioning frequently enough to have triggered an intense resistance to proposed expansion that would allow them to operate around-the-clock throughout the city.

DESTINATION: UNCERTAIN

My September ride with Peaches didn't end well.

As we approached my designated drop-off location near the Fairmont Hotel — where presidents have stayed and the late Tony Bennett first sang "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" — Peaches advised me to gather my belongings and prepare to get out of the car.

While I grabbed my bag as the robotaxi appeared to be pulling over to the curb, it suddenly sped up and inexplicably started driving away in the opposite direction.

After seeing the dashboard display screen indicating I was now somehow an estimated 20 minutes away from my destination, I grew frantic. I asked Peaches what was going on. There was no response, so I used a feature on Cruise's ride-hailing center that enables a passenger to contact a person at a call center.

The Cruise representative confirmed that Peaches had gotten confused, apologized and assured me

the robotaxi had been reprogrammed to get me to my original destination.

Indeed, the car did seem to be headed back to where I requested. Then it started doing the old same thing again, making me wonder whether Peaches might like me a little too much to let me go. Feeling more like I was stuck on Mr. Toad's Wild Ride at Disneyland than riding in an artificially intelligent car, I contacted Cruise's call center. Peaches, they told me apologetically, seemed to be malfunctioning.

Suddenly, Peaches came to a halt right in the middle of the street. I bolted from the Bolt, marooned several blocks from my destination shortly before 10 p.m.

Fortunately, I know my way around San Francisco, so I walked the rest of the way to where I needed to be. But what if this had happened to tourists? Would they know where to go? How would they feel being forced to walk around a strange neighborhood in a big city late at night?

MAYBE DON'T STOP HERE

When I discussed the incident during an interview for a story about robotaxis, Cruise CEO Kyle Vogt apologized and assured me the problem had been fixed. Sure enough, I was picked up and dropped off at my designated destinations in rides I took in two different Cruise robotaxis — one named Cherry and the other Hollandaise — on a mid-February night in San Francisco.

Yet other problems apparently persist.

In the first five months of this year alone, city transportation officials said they logged reports

cruise
DO NOT
ENTER

of more than 240 incidents in which a Cruise or Waymo vehicle may have created a safety hazard. The transportation officials believe the actual number of problems may be even higher because state regulators don't currently require Cruise or Waymo to disclose every incident involving erratic behavior in their respective fleets.

Cruise and Waymo contend that the problems cited by San Francisco officials have been overblown and are stepping up their efforts to counter the criticism.

In full-page ads that recently ran in several newspapers, Cruise declared, "Humans are terrible drivers," while trumpeting its robotaxis as a safer alternative. And Waymo's co-CEO Tekedra Mawakana recently wrote an opinion piece in the San Francisco Chronicle asserting that the company's technology is "mature enough to make a meaningful impact on road safety."

As for my night with Peaches? Whenever I reminisce about the ride, I am also reminded of another trip to New York that I took two days after the robotaxi couldn't deliver me to my destination.

After I landed at JFK Airport, I hopped into an old-fashioned taxi driven by a fellow named Talid. I remember having a pleasant conversation with Talid, who chuckled as I recounted what happened with Peaches. At the end of the ride, Talid dropped me off at Grand Central Terminal, as I had requested. Then his cab drove off — with, of course, a human still behind the wheel.

Image: Henry Payne

9:35 PM

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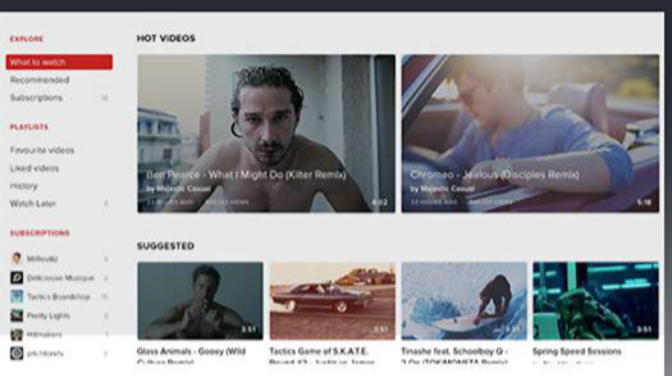

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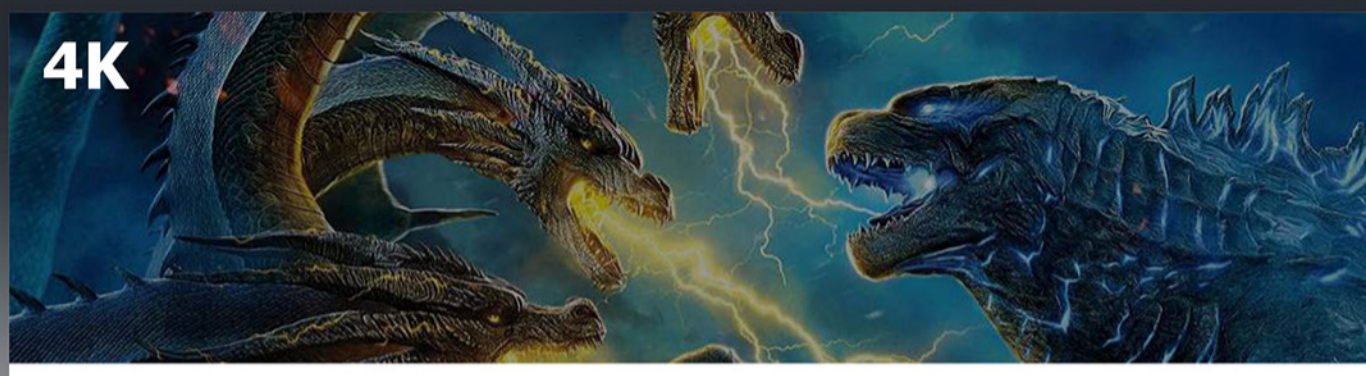

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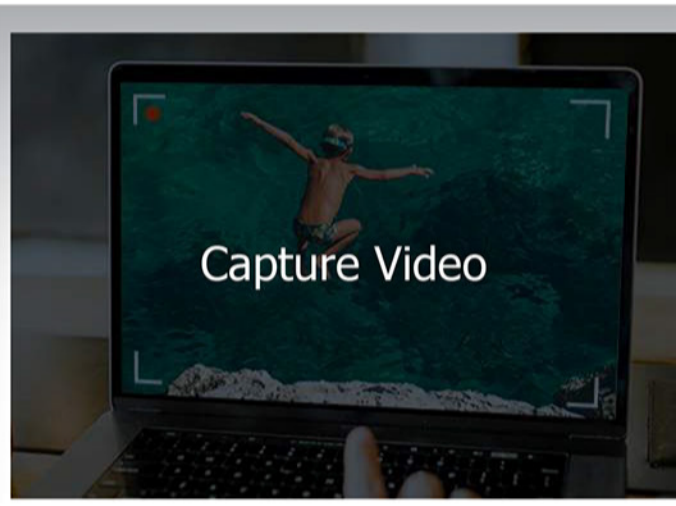

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Game Mode

REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENTS
FOR MAC GAMERS

For the gamers out there, macOS Sonoma's Game Mode could signify a turning point. Once known as a platform unsuited for gaming, Apple is making strides to transform the Mac into a competitive gaming machine, albeit with that signature simplicity that Apple is famous for.

INTRODUCING GAME MODE

Game Mode promises to provide an optimized gaming experience by prioritizing CPU and GPU resources for the game, reducing background task usage, and delivering smoother frame rates. Combined with the impressive capabilities of Apple Silicon, this means Mac users can expect a significant boost in performance.

Apple Silicon, such as the M1 chip, has already demonstrated remarkable capabilities in processing and energy efficiency. By dedicating a mode for gaming, Apple is extracting the best of the Mac, **potentially matching or even surpassing some PC counterparts.**

In typical Apple fashion, Game Mode doesn't offer customization or controls to the user. It's either on or off. When you play a game full screen on macOS Sonoma, Game Mode activates, and an icon appears in the Mac's Menubar. Your only option? Turn Game Mode Off. Though this may irk gamers used to tweaking every setting, it embodies Apple's

B Back

design philosophy: invisible, simple, and it "just works." For casual gamers or those new to gaming, the lack of configuration could be a welcome change. The focus is on seamless integration and a plug-and-play experience.

While macOS is taking the lead with Game Mode, there's a promising outlook for Game Mode expansion into iOS and iPadOS. As the lines blur between Macs and iPads in terms of hardware capability, an integrated gaming experience across Apple's ecosystem seems an achievable goal. This integration could present new opportunities for cross-platform gaming and foster a seamless gaming experience from your Mac to your iPad or iPhone.

What's perhaps most interesting is that, during its developer preview, Apple said that "Gme Mode works with any game, including all of the recent and upcoming Mac games." During its macOS Sonoma introduction, the company confirmed several new games coming to the Mac, including Death Stranding Director's Cut, Dragonheir: Silent Gods, Humankind, and World of Warcraft: Dragonflight. These new games should work with Game Mode.

THE GAME PORTING TOOLKIT

The launch of the Game Porting Toolkit marks a significant leap forward in gaming accessibility and cross-platform compatibility. This toolkit is designed to let developers seamlessly run DirectX 12 Windows-optimized titles on macOS, making the formerly exclusive games playable and optimized for MacBooks, iMacs, and more. The Game Porting Toolkit's brilliance lies in its translation layer, enabling games created in any language or using any game

RONTIER
NG1350

engine to interact with Apple Silicon. It's a critical development that offers a wide variety of gaming engines the opportunity to leverage the power and efficiency of macOS.

An essential feature of the toolkit is the introduction of new Metal Shader Converters. These converters are engineered to transform existing HLSL GPU shaders to Metal, encompassing all shading pipelines such as geometry, tessellation, mesh, and ray tracing stages. In layman's terms, the toolkit essentially translates games into a language digestible by Apple Silicon chips. It breaks down the barriers between different platforms, allowing the games not only to run but also to run optimally on macOS.

While the Game Porting Toolkit is a groundbreaking tool, it is more than that—it's a catalyst for a more inclusive gaming ecosystem. Developers can choose to fine-tune and optimize their games before porting, and the toolkit significantly shortens this process. It serves as a bridge between different platforms and acts as an accelerant to make the games more accessible and enjoyable for a broader audience. **There have been endless opinion pieces in recent years** about how bad the Mac is for gaming, and earlier this year, Dan Moren said **that "Apple's culture is what makes the Mac a bad gaming platform,"** writing "looking at the top level of Apple's leadership, it's hard

to picture any of them as avid gamers. Sure, I'm certain most of them have played games from time to time, but I don't sincerely believe any of them consider it something they're passionate about in the way that Jobs was about music." The respected journalist added: "If Apple really wants to change how gaming on the Mac is perceived, what it needs is a game czar: someone who understands and is enthusiastic about gaming, not just pretending to be, and who can back up that enthusiasm with action. To push through these obstacles, Apple needs to actively work with the community of game developers not only to show what the platform has to offer but also, more importantly, listen to what developers need to make Mac gaming a real companion–and competitor–to console and PC gaming."

THE NEW GENERATION OF SPATIAL COMPUTING

The union of Macs, gaming controls, and Vision Pro has set the stage for a new era in spatial computing. Spatial computing encompasses interactions with a computer using gestures, movements, and positioning in space. Coupled with gaming controls, Apple is enhancing immersion and providing a novel way to experience games.

However, Apple's latest move poses the question: Can it surpass the PC industry in quality, graphics, and processing power? While Game Mode is still in its infancy, the integration with Apple's hardware and the new game porting toolkit show significant potential. Apple is evidently aiming to redefine the Mac as a gaming platform. Sure, the focus on quality

Image: Samuil

FPS:84
control
option
command

and simplicity, the power of Apple Silicon, and the potential integration across devices may lure gamers and developers alike. However, the real test will be the adoption by major game developers and whether the Mac can truly provide a gaming experience that rivals or exceeds that of traditional gaming PCs. Studios will need to be tempted in order to make the transition, and the lukewarm response to Apple Arcade, a dedicated subscription service for iOS and macOS games, has not gone unnoticed in the gaming world, potentially discouraging some developers from making the leap and creating award-winning Mac titles.

The introduction of Game Mode signals Apple's intention to carve a place for the Mac in the gaming world. From its seamless integration to the optimization of Apple Silicon, the direction is clear: a new dawn for Mac gaming has begun.

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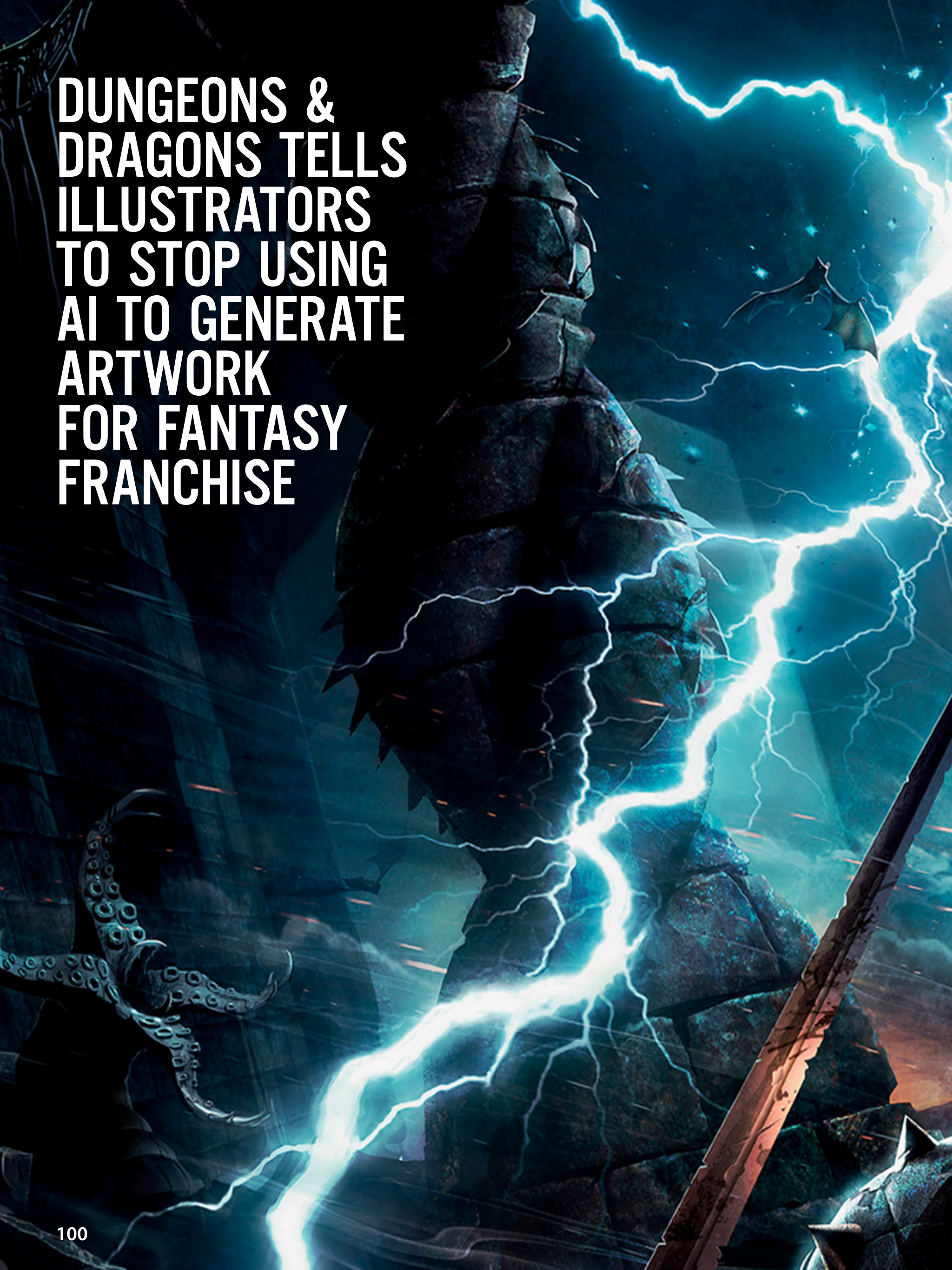
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS TELLS ILLUSTRATORS TO STOP USING AI TO GENERATE ARTWORK FOR FANTASY FRANCHISE



The Dungeons & Dragons role-playing game franchise says it won't allow artists to use artificial intelligence technology to draw its cast of sorcerers, druids and other characters and scenery.

D&D art is supposed to be fanciful. But at least one ax-wielding giant seemed too weird for some fans, leading them to take to social media to question if it was human-made.

Hasbro-owned D&D Beyond, which makes online tools and other companion content for the franchise, said it didn't know that an illustrator it has worked with for nearly a decade used AI to create commissioned artwork for an upcoming book. The franchise, run by the Hasbro subsidiary Wizards of the Coast, said in a statement that it has talked to that artist and is clarifying its rules.

"He will not use AI for Wizards' work moving forward," said a post from D&D Beyond's account on X, formerly Twitter. "We are revising our process and updating our artist guidelines to make clear that artists must refrain from using AI art generation as part of their art creation process for developing D&D."

Today's AI-generated art often shows telltale glitches, such as distorted limbs, which is what caught the eye of skeptical D&D fans.

Hasbro and Wizards of the Coast didn't respond to requests for further comment. Hasbro bought D&D Beyond for $146.3 million last year. The Rhode Island-based toy giant has owned Wizards of the Coast for more than two decades.

The art in question is in a soon-to-be-released hardcover book of monster descriptions and

lore called "Bigby Presents: Glory of the Giants." The digital and physical version of the package is selling for $59.95 on the D&D website and due for an Aug. 15 release.

The use of AI tools to assist in creative work has raised copyright and labor concerns in a number of industries, helping to fuel the Hollywood strike, causing the music industry's Recording Academy to revise its Grammy Awards protocols and leading some visual artists to sue AI companies for ingesting their work without their consent to build image-generators that anyone can use.

Hasbro rival Mattel used AI-generated images to help come up with ideas for new Hot Wheels toy cars, though it hasn't said if that was more than an experiment.

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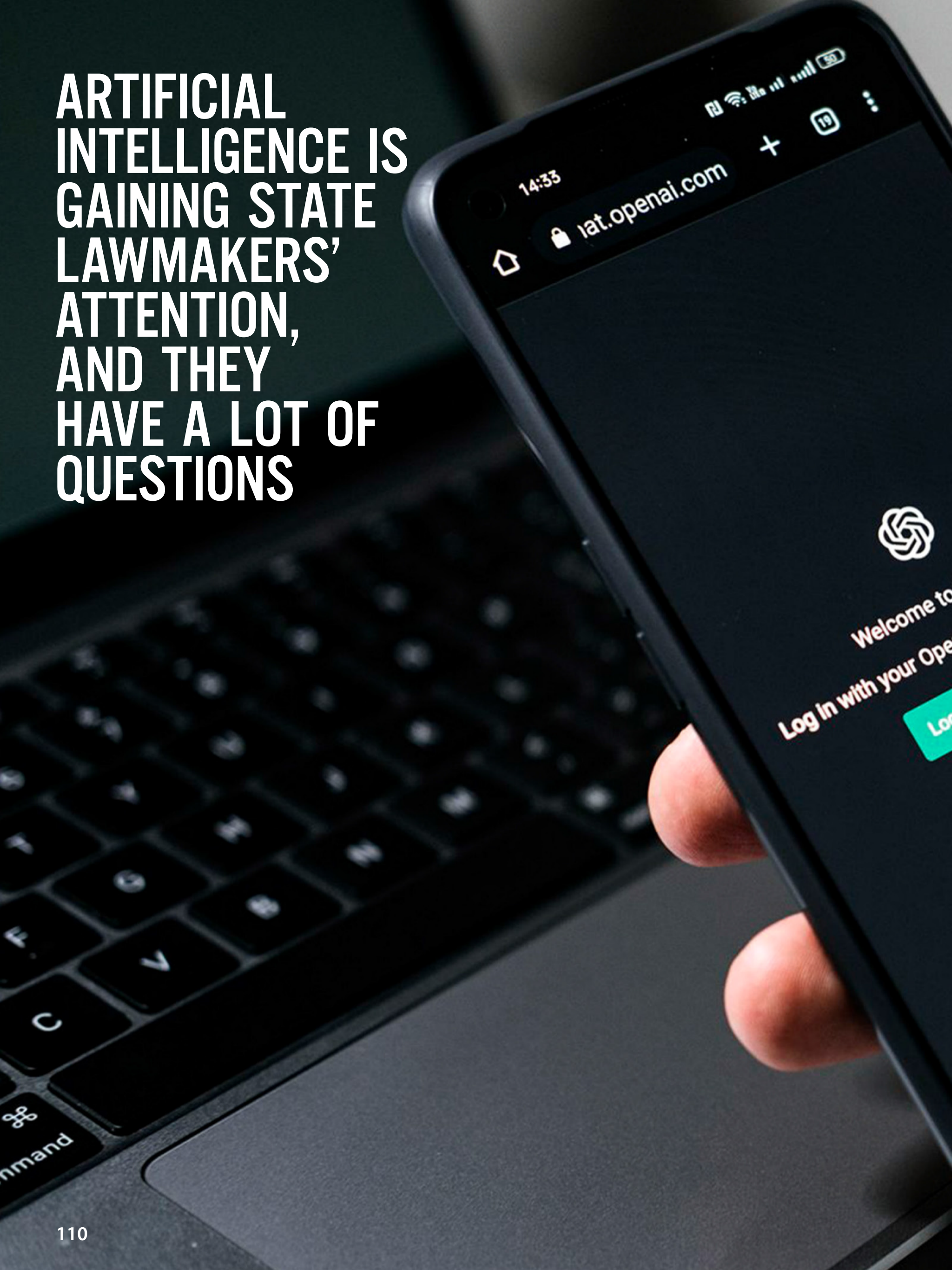
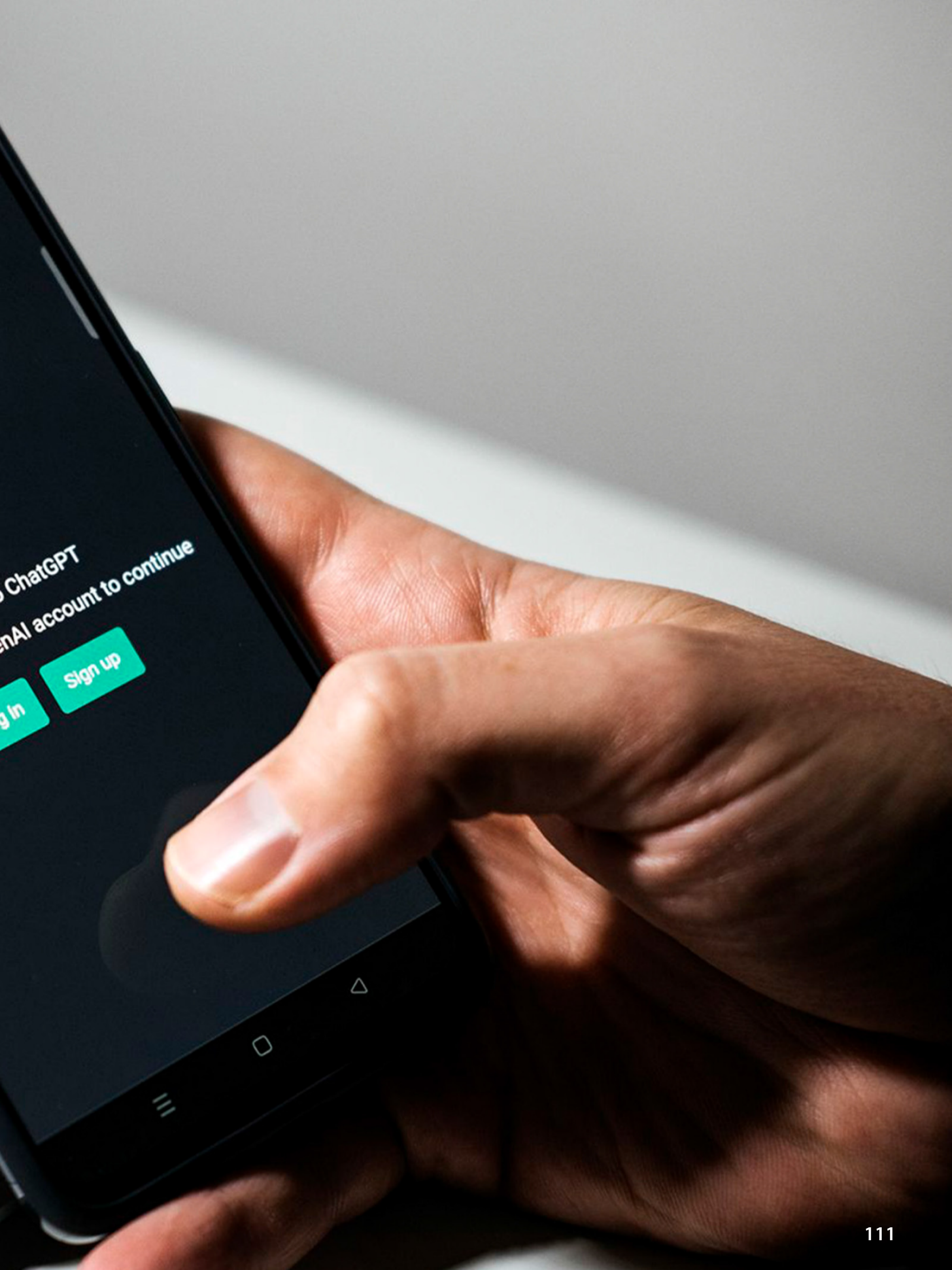
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS GAINING STATE LAWMAKERS' ATTENTION, AND THEY HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS

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As state lawmakers rush to get a handle on fast-evolving artificial intelligence technology, they're often focusing first on their own state governments before imposing restrictions on the private sector.

Legislators are seeking ways to protect constituents from discrimination and other harms while not hindering cutting-edge advancements in medicine, science, business, education and more.

"We're starting with the government. We're trying to set a good example," Connecticut state Sen. James Maroney said during a floor debate in May.

Connecticut plans to inventory all of its government systems using artificial intelligence by the end of 2023, posting the information online. And starting next year, state officials must regularly review these systems to ensure they won't lead to unlawful discrimination.

Maroney, a Democrat who has become a go-to AI authority in the General Assembly, said Connecticut lawmakers will likely focus on private industry next year. He plans to work this fall on model AI legislation with lawmakers in Colorado, New York, Virginia, Minnesota and elsewhere that includes "broad guardrails" and focuses on matters like product liability and requiring impact assessments of AI systems.

"It's rapidly changing and there's a rapid adoption of people using it. So we need to get ahead of this," he said in a later interview. "We're actually already behind it, but we can't really wait too much longer to put in some form of accountability."

Overall, at least 25 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia introduced artificial

Generative AI refers to a class of artificial inte
new data, such as images, text, or music, tha
Generative models learn to recognize patter
use this knowledge to generate new data th
identical.

There are many different types o
(VAEs), Generative Adversarial N
probabilistic model of the inp
sampling from this model. G
discriminator, that work to
real data. Autoregressive
probability distribution

Generative AI has m

intelligence bills this year. As of late July, 14 states and Puerto Rico had adopted resolutions or enacted legislation, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The list doesn't include bills focused on specific AI technologies, such as facial recognition or autonomous cars, something NCSL is tracking separately.

Legislatures in Texas, North Dakota, West Virginia and Puerto Rico have created advisory bodies to study and monitor AI systems their respective state agencies are using, while Louisiana formed a new technology and cyber security committee to study AI's impact on state operations, procurement and policy. Other states took a similar approach last year.

Lawmakers want to know "Who's using it? How are you using it? Just gathering that data to figure out what's out there, who's doing what," said Heather Morton, a legislative analysist at NCSL who tracks artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, privacy and internet issues in state legislatures. "That is something that the states are trying to figure out within their own state borders."

Connecticut's new law, which requires AI systems used by state agencies to be regularly scrutinized for possible unlawful discrimination, comes after an investigation by the Media Freedom and Information Access Clinic at Yale Law School determined AI is already being used to assign students to magnet schools, set bail and distribute welfare benefits, among other tasks. However, details of the algorithms are mostly unknown to the public.

AI technology, the group said, "has spread throughout Connecticut's government rapidly

and largely unchecked, a development that's not unique to this state."

Richard Eppink, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Idaho, testified before Congress in May about discovering, through a lawsuit, the "secret computerized algorithms" Idaho was using to assess people with developmental disabilities for federally funded health care services. The automated system, he said in written testimony, included corrupt data that relied on inputs the state hadn't validated.

AI can be shorthand for many different technologies, ranging from algorithms recommending what to watch next on Netflix to generative AI systems such as ChatGPT that can aid in writing or create new images or other media. The surge of commercial investment in generative AI tools has generated public fascination and concerns about their ability to trick people and spread disinformation, among other dangers.

Some states haven't attempted to tackle the issue yet. In Hawaii, state Sen. Chris Lee, a Democrat, said lawmakers didn't pass any legislation this year governing AI "simply because I think at the time, we didn't know what to do."

Instead, the Hawaii House and Senate passed a resolution Lee proposed that urges Congress to adopt safety guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence and limit its application in the use of force by police and the military.

Lee, vice-chair of the Senate Labor and Technology Committee, said he hopes to introduce a bill in next year's session that is similar to Connecticut's new law. Lee also wants to create a permanent working group

or department to address AI matters with the right expertise, something he admits is difficult to find.

“There aren’t a lot of people right now working within state governments or traditional institutions that have this kind of experience,” he said.

The European Union is leading the world in building guardrails around AI. There has been discussion of bipartisan AI legislation in Congress, which Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said in June would maximize the technology’s benefits and mitigate significant risks.

Yet the New York senator did not commit to specific details. In July, President Joe Biden announced his administration had secured voluntary commitments from seven U.S. companies meant to ensure their AI products are safe before releasing them.

Maroney said ideally the federal government would lead the way in AI regulation. But he said the federal government can’t act at the same speed as a state legislature.

“And as we’ve seen with the data privacy, it’s really had to bubble up from the states,” Maroney said.

Some state-level bills proposed this year have been narrowly tailored to address specific AI-related concerns. Proposals in Massachusetts would place limitations on mental health providers using AI and prevent “dystopian work environments” where workers don’t have control over their personal data. A proposal in New York would place restrictions on employers using AI as an “automated employment decision tool” to filter job candidates.

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ChatGPT

Examples

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"Got any creative ideas for a 10 year old's birthday?" →

"How do I make an HTTP request in Javascript?" →

CHAT GP
AI

North Dakota passed a bill defining what a person is, making it clear the term does not include artificial intelligence. Republican Gov. Doug Burgum, a long-shot presidential contender, has said such guardrails are needed for AI but the technology should still be embraced to make state government less redundant and more responsive to citizens.

In Arizona, Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs vetoed legislation that would prohibit voting machines from having any artificial intelligence software. In her veto letter, Hobbs said the bill "attempts to solve challenges that do not currently face our state."

In Washington, Democratic Sen. Lisa Wellman, a former systems analyst and programmer, said state lawmakers need to prepare for a world in which machine systems become ever more prevalent in our daily lives.

She plans to roll out legislation next year that would require students to take computer science to graduate high school.

"AI and computer science are now, in my mind, a foundational part of education," Wellman said. "And we need to understand really how to incorporate it."

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APPLE'S EARNINGS TOP ANALYSTS' FORECASTS, BUT YEAR-OVER-YEAR SALES DROP FOR THIRD STRAIGHT QUARTER

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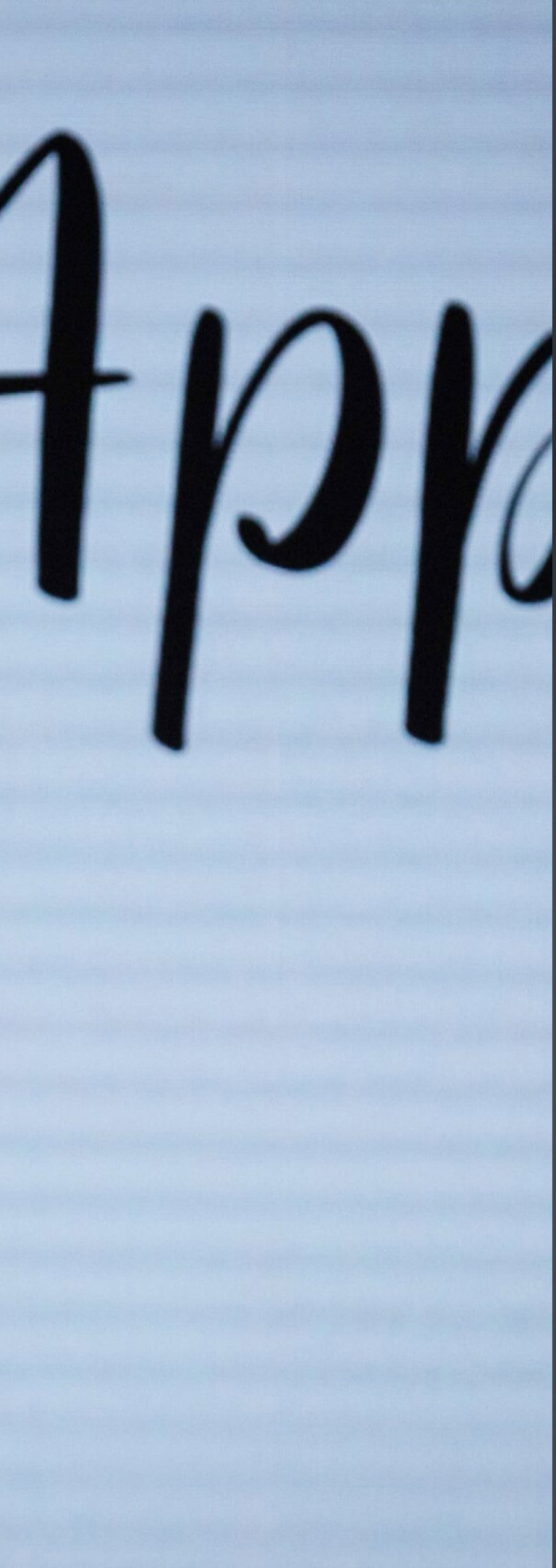

Apple's eked out a slightly higher profit last quarter even though sales dipped during the period, a showing that may not be enough to sustain investor enthusiasm that recently made the iPhone maker the first publicly held U.S. company to be valued at $3 trillion.

The results released last week (03) covered April through June, the third consecutive quarter that the Cupertino, California, company has posted a year-over-year decline in revenue. That's its longest stretch of falling sales in nearly seven years.

Apple also indicated revenue for the current July through September quarter is expected to decline, despite the anticipated release of the next iPhone. The disappointing forecast, coupled with the lukewarm results for the past quarter, caused Apple's stock to fall 2% after the announcement.

The shares behave similarly during the week, pushing Apple's market value below the $3 trillion threshold it eclipsed in late June.

Revenue for Apple's most recent quarter totaled $81.8 billion, down 1% from last year. Profit edged up 2% from a year ago to $19.9 billion, or $1.26 per share.

"We continue to face an uneven macroeconomic environment," Apple CEO Tim Cook told investors during the conference call.

The earnings were better than the $1.20 per share projected by analysts polled by FactSet Research, while revenue matched analyst forecasts.

But iPhones sales — the product segment watched most closely by Wall Street — fell

2% from a year ago to $39.7 billion, below analysts' predictions.

"Investors appear to be reacting to the slight miss in iPhone sales, but I wouldn't read too much into it as many consumers are holding out until the next iPhone release," said Investing.com analyst Jesse Cohen.

Investors have remained upbeat about Apple's prospects despite the company's modest sales erosion, largely because its results have been less wobbly than other major technology companies that suffered steeper slides coming out of pandemic. Several stalwarts in the sector have announced mass layoffs.

By contrast, Apple has held its ground while still managing to generate eye-popping profits. It has also laid the groundwork for potential growth, recently unveiling a sleek $3,500 headset that many analysts believe will introduce the still-geeky realm of virtual reality to a wider audience.

Apple's performance capped a succession of mostly positive quarterly reports from Big Tech companies regaining their stride after stumbling through much of year. Tech's troubles coincided with the pandemic winding down, as people weaned themselves from digital services and products that were in higher demand while they were spending more time at home.

Improving industry conditions have helped lift the tech-driven Nasdaq composite index by 33% so far this year.

But legal efforts to curb Big Tech's power could pose other obstacles.

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Apple is still fighting court rulings that would allow iPhone app makers to provide payment options for digital services outside Apple's own system, which generates 15% to 30% commissions for the company. Those fees are a lucrative part of Apple's services division, which generated $21.2 billion in revenue during the past quarter. The battle over that issue will likely be settled by the U.S. Supreme Court, but probably not until next year.

Another key issue for the service division is expected to emerge in a major antitrust case against Google that is scheduled to go to trial Sept. 12 in Washington D.C.

The U.S. Department of Justice and dozens of state attorneys general are trying to prove that Google has been abusing and maintaining its dominance of internet search by forging deals that funnel traffic to it. One of the alliances makes Google the default search engine on the iPhone and other products, for which the company pays Apple an estimated $12 billion to $15 billion annually.

ZOOM, WHICH THRIVED ON THE REMOTE WORK REVOLUTION, WANTS WORKERS BACK IN THE OFFICE PART-TIME

Image: Chris Montgomery

The company whose name became synonymous with remote work is joining the growing return-to-office trend.

Zoom, the video conferencing pioneer, is asking employees who live within a 50-mile radius of its offices to work onsite two days a week, a company spokesperson confirmed in an email. The statement said the company has decided that "a structured hybrid approach – meaning employees that live near an office need to be onsite two days a week to interact with their teams – is most effective for Zoom."

The new policy, which will be rolled out in August and September, was first reported by the New York Times, which said Zoom CEO Eric Yuan fielded questions from employees unhappy with the new policy during a Zoom meeting last week.

Zoom, based in San Jose, California, saw explosive growth during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic as companies scrambled to shift to remote work, and even families

ZOOM Cloud Meetings

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and friends turned to the platform for virtual gatherings. But that growth has stagnated as the pandemic threat has ebbed.

Shares of Zoom Video Communications Inc. have tumbled hard since peaking early in the pandemic, from $559 apiece in October 2020, to below $70. Shares have slumped more than 10% to start the month of August. In February, Zoom laid off about 1,300 people, or about 15% of its workforce.

Google, Salesforce and Amazon are among major companies that have also stepped up their return-to-office policies despite a backlash from some employees.

Similarly to Zoom, many companies are asking their employees to show up to the office only part-time, as hybrid work shapes up to be a lasting legacy of the pandemic. Since January, the average weekly office occupancy rate in 10 major U.S. cities has hovered around 50%, dipping below that threshold during the summer months, according to Kastle Systems, which measures occupancy through entry swipes.

Image: Gabby Jones

zoom

ZOOM SAYS IT ISN'T TRAINING AI ON CALLS WITHOUT CONSENT. BUT OTHER DATA IS FAIR GAME

An update to Zoom's terms of service is raising alarm bells on social media, with users claiming it reveals the videoconferencing company is now tapping their online doctor visits and virtual happy hours to train artificial intelligence models.

"Zoom terms of service now require you to allow AI to train on ALL your data — audio, facial recognition, private conversations — unconditionally and irrevocably, with no opt out," read one widely-shared tweet this week that has since been deleted. "Don't try to negotiate with our new overlords."

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The company quickly responded with a blog post stressing that it "will not use audio, video, or chat customer content to train our artificial intelligence models without your consent," and adding a line to the terms to make this clearer.

Online privacy experts say that this policy is now accurately reflected in the document. However, the terms do still allow Zoom to train AI on other data, such as how customers behave — and they question how much choice some meeting participants will have to opt out if, say, their boss decides otherwise.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

CLAIM: Zoom's terms of service give the company permission to use all customer data, including private conversations, for training artificial intelligence, with no ability to opt out.

THE FACTS: That is not accurate, at least now that Zoom has added language to the terms to make its policy clearer, experts say.

The current terms would not allow the company to tap user-generated content like video and chat for AI training without a customer opting in. However, once a meeting host agrees, other participants would have to leave if they don't want to consent. The terms also allow Zoom to use other data, including information about user behavior, without additional permission.

"The face of these terms of service does now assure the user that Zoom is not going to use their customer content for the purpose of training artificial intelligence models without their consent," John Davisson, director of litigation and senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center.

At issue is language Zoom added to its terms in March. The document differentiates between two types of data: "service generated data," such as what features customers use and what part of the world they are in, and "customer content," which is the data created by users themselves, such as audio or chat transcripts.

The terms state that service-generated data can be used for "machine learning or artificial intelligence (including the purposes of training and tuning algorithms and models." Zoom's blog post says the company considers such data "to be our data," and experts confirm this language would allow the company to use this data for AI training without obtaining additional consent.

Separately, the terms say that customer content may also be used "for the purpose" of machine learning or AI.

After this was highlighted on social media this week, the company clarified in its post that this refers to new generative AI features that users must agree to, which create things like automated meeting summaries for customers. Zoom said in a statement that in addition to enabling the features for themselves, users must separately consent to sharing this data with the company.

Experts said that the language in the March update was wide-reaching and could have opened the door for the company to use that data without additional permission if it wanted to.

But Zoom added a more explicit caveat to the terms, saying: "Notwithstanding the above, Zoom will not use audio, video or chat Customer Content to train our artificial intelligence models without your consent."

oom

With this language, Davisson said that using such data to train AI without a user consenting would now constitute a violation of the terms on Zoom's part, opening the company up to litigation.

However, experts said the way this function works could still pose problems for some participants in Zoom calls if the host opts into the generative AI features.

Zoom says that if a meeting organizer decides to use the meeting summary feature, participants are sent a notification alerting them that an AI feature has been enabled and that their data may be shared for AI training. They are prompted to either proceed with the meeting or to leave.

Although this in theory offers all participants the ability to control how their data is used, it may not be possible for someone to opt out of a meeting or forgo Zoom altogether if they disagree, said Katharine Trendacosta, director of policy and advocacy at the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

"If the administrator consents and it's your boss at your work who requires you to use Zoom, how is that really consent?" she asked.

Davisson has similar concerns.

"That sort of just-in-time acquisition of 'consent,' is not real consent," he said. "And so that's a pretty misleading caveat from them to introduce. It claims to rest on consent, but what it's resting on really is just sort of what the meeting organizer or system administrator has decided to do."

IF YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO BE IN 'HAMILTON,' YOU CAN NOW DO SO — ON ROBLOX

The landmark Broadway musical "Hamilton" has landed on Roblox, turning the innovative stage show into an immersive online environment for a new generation.

"'Hamilton' has global recognition. Roblox has 66 million daily active users from all around the world. What a perfect match," Matt Edelman, president and chief commercial officer for Super League — which designed and built the online experience.

In the Hamilton Simulator, players use their own avatars as they rub shoulders with the musical's characters and negotiate through 10 levels set during the Revolutionary War. It starts at the

Image: Paul Sancya

New York docks and the goal is to free the city from British yoke. Appropriately, the music-filled game requires no real money from players.

"The intent here was to create a fun experience for this community and by doing so, introduce them to 'Hamilton' if they don't already know it, or to honor and inspire the passion that they have if they're already fans," says Edelman.

The game has the blessing of writer-composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose blockbuster musical charts the rise and fall of statesman Alexander Hamilton and stresses his orphan, immigrant roots as well as his near-Greek tragedy of a fall.

Roblox is the largest immersive gaming platform on the planet and businesses like Mattel, the NFL, Dave & Buster's and Cirque du Soleil have all planted a flag there, as have fashion labels Vans, Ralph Lauren, Nike, Tommy Hilfiger, Givenchy and Gucci.

Image: Theo Wargo

"If you are an intellectual property owner and you want to connect to the younger generations — people really under 25 and particularly under 18 — that's where they socialize, that's where they learn. More than half of Gen Z expects to discover a brand for the first time in an immersive space," Edelman says.

Hamilton Simulator players assemble a squad from characters in the musical — James Madison and Charles Lee, perhaps, to begin with, and more valuable characters like Maria Reynolds and Angelica Schuyler coming later — to confront Redcoats. Victories earn coins, which can be used to better arm companions as stronger enemies lurk.

The 10 settings include a tavern, George Washington's office, town squares, the ballroom where Hamilton and Angelica fall in love and the Battle of Yorktown. Each level has songs from the musical, including "Guns and Ships," "You'll Be Back," and "The Schuyler Sisters," used as a sort of sonic laser to wear down and defeat enemies.

"For us, being able to allow the player to connect to the characters and the music was really important. And that really inspired the general approach to the gameplay," Edelman says.

The simulator currently ends around the midpoint of the musical, with British rule defeated and a nascent country needing its Founding Fathers to guide them into becoming a nation of laws. Creators hope the simulator can also grow.

"We have plenty more in the future to expand on and we're really excited about what we can do with this experience moving forward over

Alexander Hamilton
Mythical

the coming months to really be able to expand gameplay, expand the story and really be able to listen to our players and what are they doing," Edelman says.

Each scene is carefully realized, with ceremonial swords, candles burning, flowers, artwork, sandbags and smoke. David Korins, who designed "Hamilton" for the stage, consulted on the look of the simulator and offered his tweaks. (There are also Easter eggs, like The Public theater, a nod to the off-Broadway space where "Hamilton" premiered.)

"'Hamilton' has achieved something that feels timeless. And if you can achieve that with an intellectual property, you can bring it into any channel and have success because it has that innate feel of belonging everywhere," Edelman says.

The genesis of the idea came from Maggie Brohn, the executive producer for "Hamilton" worldwide and chief operating officer of Adventureland LCC, the lead producer for "Hamilton" and other Broadway shows.

She had been pondering a marriage between the musical and a gamemaker, eventually turning for advice to Edelman, her brother, who knew the perfect platform.

"My kids during COVID were glued to Roblox," she says. "They became our our test group as we've been going through this."

The hardest part was taking an award-winning linear narrative and turning it into an interactive experience. The breakthrough came when it was conceived as a simulator, one of the most popular Roblox genres.

"When you bring intellectual property to a medium where it did not originate, if it doesn't have kind of some of the natural components to it already that belong in that new medium, it isn't easy," says Edelman.

Super League and "Hamilton" creators suspect their simulator will attract some visitors who have never heard of the musical, but will get caught in its gravitational force — much like the cast album became a hit by people who hadn't yet seen the show.

"The music brought people to 'Hamilton' in some cases before the actual production of the show brought them there," says Edelman. "I don't think this will be any different if if we achieve our primary goal, which is to make this a fun gameplay experience that attracts the Roblox community."

Image: Rafael Henrique

ASTRONAUTS GET FIRST LOOK AT THE SPACECRAFT THAT WILL FLY THEM AROUND THE MOON

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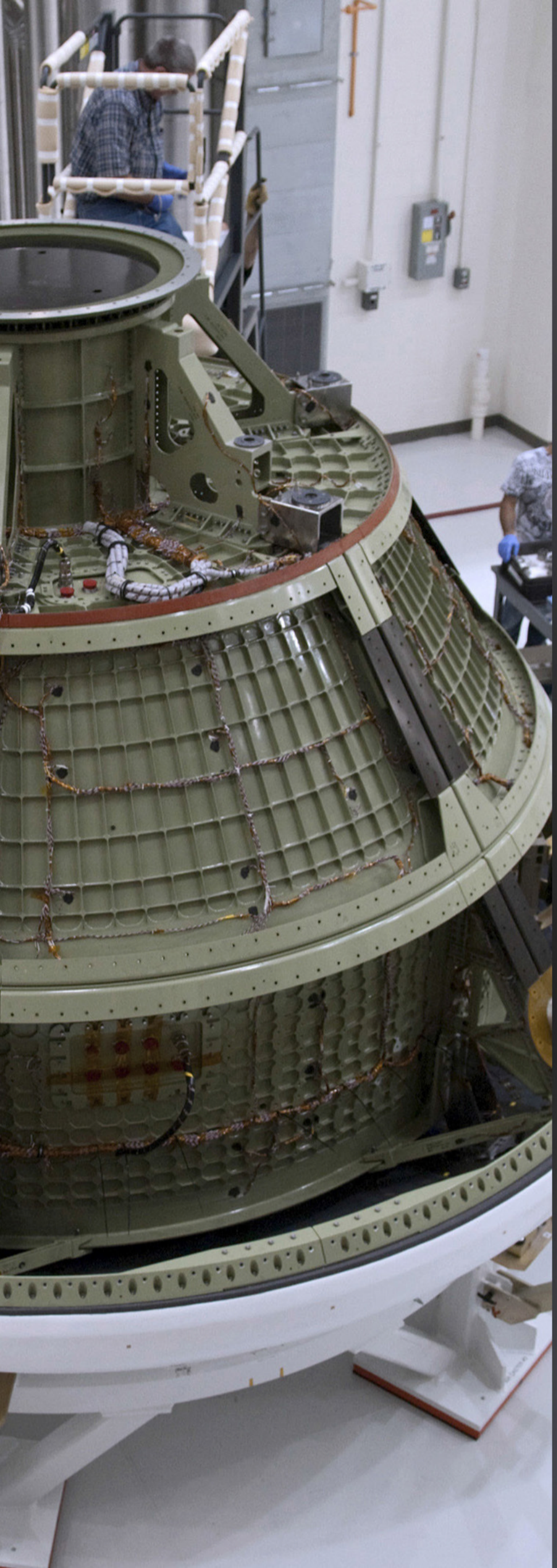

The four astronauts assigned to fly around the moon in another year got their first look at their spacecraft, as NASA warned there could be more delays.

They peeked into their unfinished Orion capsule, red "Remove Before Flight" tags still dangling from it, and came away impressed.

"Nothing else looks like that ... that's what gave me shivers," astronaut Christina Koch told reporters.

The U.S.-Canadian crew inspected the capsule during a visit to Kennedy Space Center this week. NASA plans to send the four around the moon and back late next year.

Investigations into the capsule's heat shield, however, could delay this first lunar trip by astronauts in more than half a century. Last year's test flight around the moon, with no one on board, resulted in unexpected charring and loss of material from the heat shield at the bottom of the capsule. The heat shield is meant to protect the capsule against the extreme heat of reentry.

The following mission of the Artemis program — a moon landing — faces even more hurdles and may slip from late 2025 into 2026. The main issue remains SpaceX's Starship, the rocketship that will carry two NASA astronauts from lunar orbit down to the south pole.

With only one test flight so far for Starship — resulting in an explosion a few minutes after liftoff in April — NASA is concerned whether Elon Musk's SpaceX can pull everything off in time. The space agency will not commit to a moon landing using Starship, until SpaceX conducts multiple Starship orbital flights, sets up

JEREMY HANSEN
NASA
VICTOR GLOVER

REID WISEMAN
CHRISTINA H. KOCH

a refueling depot around Earth and completes a moon-landing dress rehearsal.

NASA's exploration systems development chief, Jim Free, said the space agency should have a clearer handle on where things stand this fall.

"It's clear that we have a lot of work to do," said astronaut Victor Glover.

Despite such lingering worries, the mood inside the Neil Armstrong Operations and Checkout Building — named after the first man to step onto the moon — was upbeat. The astronauts — assigned to the mission amid hoopla last spring — were asked what it felt like to be in such hallowed grounds.

Crew commander Reid Wiseman said it wasn't their own trip but the next moon landing that is "going to carry the dream for us."

More than 200 rock concert speakers were stacked around the capsule for an acoustic test later this week. NASA planned to blast the place with up to 143 decibels of rumbling noise — imitating the thunderous sounds of liftoff — to see how well the windows, wiring and other parts of the capsule hold up.

Gesturing toward the capsule, Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen said: "That's real ... It's not a dream."

ORION

HIP-HOP TURNS 50, REINVENTING ITSELF AND SWATHS OF THE WORLD ALONG THE WAY

It was born in the break, all those decades ago — that moment when a song's vocals dropped, instruments quieted down and the beat took the stage. It was then that hip-hop came into the world, taking the moment and reinventing it. Something new, coming out of something familiar.

At the hands of the DJs playing the albums, that break moment became something more: a composition in itself, repeated in an endless loop, back and forth between the turntables. The MCs got in on it, speaking their own clever

rhymes and wordplay over it. So did the dancers, the b-boys and b-girls who hit the floor to break-dance. It took on its own visual style, with graffiti artists bringing it to the streets and subways of New York City.

It didn't stay there, of course. A musical form, a culture, with reinvention as its very DNA would never, could never. Hip-hop spread, from the parties to the parks, through New York City's boroughs and then the region, around the country and the world.

And at each step: change, adaptation, as new, different voices came in and made it their own, in sound, in lyric, in purpose, in style. Its foundations steeped in the Black communities where it first made itself known and also spreading out and expanding, like ripples in water, until there's no corner of the world that hasn't been touched by it.

Not only being reinvented, but reinventing. Art, culture, fashion, community, social justice, politics, sports, business: Hip-hop has impacted them all, transforming even as it has been transformed.

In hip-hop, "when someone does it, then that's how it's done. When someone does something different, then that's a new way," says Babatunde Akinboboye, a Nigerian-American opera singer and longtime hip-hop fan in Los Angeles, who creates content on social media using both musical styles.

Hip-hop "connects to what is true. And what is true, lasts."

Female rappers have been a part of hip-hop since its debut. Women have fought to shape their identification in hip-hop and

demand recognition. (August 9)(AP Video: Sharon Johnson)

Those looking for a hip-hop starting point have landed on one, turning this year into a 50th-birthday celebration. Aug. 11, 1973 was the date a young Clive Campbell, known as DJ Kool Herc around his Bronx stomping grounds, deejayed a back-to-school party for his younger sister in the community room of an apartment building on Sedgwick Avenue.

Campbell, who was born and spent his early years in Jamaica before his family moved to the Bronx, was still a teen himself at that time, just 18, when he began extending the musical breaks of the records he was playing to create a different kind of dancing opportunity. He'd started speaking over the beat, reminiscent of the "toasting" style heard in Jamaica.

It wasn't long before the style could be heard all over the city — and began to spread around the New York City metro region.

Among those who started to hear about it were some young men across the river in Englewood, New Jersey, who started making up rhymes to go along with the beats. In 1979, they auditioned as rappers for Sylvia Robinson, a singer turned music producer who co-founded Sugar Hill Records.

As The Sugarhill Gang, they put out " Rapper's Delight " and introduced the country to a record that would reach as high as 36 on Billboard's Top 100 chart list, and even make it to No. 1 in some European countries.

"Now what you hear is not a test: I'm rappin' to the beat/And me, the groove, and my friends are

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gonna try to move your feet," Michael "Wonder Mike" Wright said in one of the song's stanzas.

Wright says he had no doubt the song — and, by extension, hip-hop — was "going to be big. "I knew it was going to blow up and play all over the world because it was a new genre of music," he tells. "You had classical jazz, bebop, rock, pop, and here comes a new form of music that didn't exist."

And it was one based in self-expression, says Guy "Master Gee" O'Brien. "If you couldn't sing or you couldn't play an instrument, you could recite poetry and speak your mind. And so it became accessible to the everyman."

And everywomen, too, of course. Female voices took their chances on the microphone and dance floors as well, like Roxanne Shante, a native of New York City's Queens borough who was only 14 years old in 1984. That was the year she became one of the first female MCs, those rhyming over the beat, to gain a wider audience — and was part of what was likely the first well-known instance of rappers using their song tracks to take sonic shots at other rappers, in a back-and-forth song battle known as The Roxanne Wars.

"When I look at my female rappers of today, I see hope and inspiration," Shante says. "When you look at some of your female rappers today and you see the businesses that they own and the barriers that they were able to break it down, it's amazing to me and it's an honor for me to even be a part of that from the beginning."

Plenty of other women have joined her over the intervening decades, from Queen Latifah to Lil' Kim to Nicki Minaj to Megan Thee Stallion and

more, speaking on their experiences as women in hip-hop and the larger world. That doesn't even begin to touch the list of women rappers hailing from other countries.

They're women like Tkay Maidza, born in Zimbabwe and raised in Australia, a songwriter and rapper in the early part of her career. She's thrilled with the diverse female company she's keeping in hip-hop, and with the variety of subjects they're talking about.

"There's so many different pockets ... so many ways to exist," she says. "It's not about what other people have done. ... You can always recreate the blueprint."

The emphasis on self-expression has also meant that over the years, hip-hop has been used as a medium for just about everything.

Want to talk about a party or how awesome and rich you are? Go for it. A cute guy or beautiful girl catch your eye? Say it in a verse. Looking to take that sound coming out of New York City and adapt it to a West Coast vibe, or a Chicago beat, a New Orleans groove, or an Atlanta rhythm, or these days, sounds in Egypt, India, Australia, Nigeria? It's all you, and it's all hip-hop. (Now whether anyone listening thought it was actually any good? That was a different story.)

Mainstream America hasn't always been ready for it. The sexually explicit content from Miami's 2 Live Crew made their 1989 album "As Nasty As They Want To Be" the subject of a legal battle over obscenity and freedom of expression; a later album, "Banned in the USA," became the first to get an official record industry label about explicit content.

STREET
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Coming from America's Black communities, that has also meant hip-hop has been a tool to speak out against injustice, like in 1982 when Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five told the world in " The Message," that the stresses of poverty in their city neighborhoods made it feel "like a jungle sometimes/It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under."

Other figures like Common and Kendrick Lamar have also turned to a conscious lyricism in their hip-hop, with perhaps none better known than Public Enemy, whose "Fight the Power" became an anthem when it was created for filmmaker Spike Lee's 1989 classic "Do the Right Thing," which chronicled racial tension in a Brooklyn neighborhood.

Some in hip-hop pulled no punches, using the art form and the culture as a no-holds-barred way of showcasing the troubles of their lives. Often those messages have been met with fear or disdain in the mainstream. When N.W.A. came "Straight Outta Compton" in 1988 with loud, brash tales of police abuse and gang life, radio stations recoiled.

Hip-hop (mainly that done by Black artists) and law enforcement have had a contentious relationship over the years, each eyeing the other with suspicion. There's been cause for some of it. In some forms of hip-hop the ties between rappers and criminal figures were real, and the violence that spiraled out, as in high-profile deaths like that of Tupac Shakur in 1996, The Notorious B.I.G. in 1997, sometimes got very bloody. But in a country where Black people are often looked at with suspicion by authority,

there have also been plenty of stereotypes about hip-hop and criminality.

As hip-hop spread over the years, a host of voices have used it to speak out on the issues that are dear to them. Look at Bobby Sanchez, a Peruvian American transgender, two-spirit poet and rapper who has released a song in Quechua, the language of the Wari people that her father came from. "Quechua 101 Land Back Please" references the killing of Indigenous peoples and calls for land restoration.

"I think it's very special and cool when artists use it to reflect society because it makes it bigger than just them," Sanchez says. "To me, it's always political, really, no matter what you're talking about, because hip-hop, in a way, is a form of resistance."

Yes, it's an American creation. And yes, it's still heavily influenced by what's happening in America. But hip-hop has found homes all over the planet, turned to by people in every community under the sun to express what matters to them.

When hip-hop first started being absorbed outside of the United States, it was often with a mimicking of American styles and messages, says P. Khalil Saucier, who has studied the spread of hip-hop across the countries of Africa.

That's not the case these days. Homegrown hip-hop can be found everywhere, a prime example of the genre's penchant for staying relevant and vital by being reinvented by the people doing it.

"The culture as a whole has kind of really rooted itself because it's been able to now transform itself from simply an importation, if

BODYBEA
NIFICENT RECORD
BIZ
MARKIE
ROCK
The
BELLS

Bills
Flavor
talent

you will, to now really being local in its multiple manifestations, regardless of what country you're looking at," says Saucier, a professor of critical Black studies at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania.

That's to everyone's benefit, says Rishma Dhaliwal, founder of London's I Am Hip-Hop magazine.

"Hip-hop is ... allowing you in someone's world. It's allowing you into someone's struggles," she says. "It's a big microphone to say, `Well, the streets say this is what is going on here and this is what you might not know about us. This is how we feel, and this is who we are.'"

The impact hasn't just been in one direction. Hip-hop hasn't just been changed; it has made change. It has gone into other spaces and made them different. It strutted through the fashion world as it brought its own sensibility to streetwear. It has revitalized companies; just ask Timberland what sales were like before its workboots became de rigueur hip-hop wear.

Or look at perhaps the perfect example: "Hamilton," Lin Manuel Miranda's groundbreaking musical about a distant white historical figure that came to life in the rhythms of its hip-hop soundtrack, bringing a different energy and audience to the theater world.

Hip-hop "has done a very good job at making culture more accessible. It has broken into spaces that we're traditionally not allowed to break into," Dhaliwal says.

For Usha Jey, freestyling hip-hop was the perfect thing to mix with the classical, formal South Asian dance style of Bharatnatyam. The 26-year-

old choreographer, born in France to Tamil immigrant parents, created a series of social media videos last year showing the two styles interacting with each other. It was her training in hip-hop that gave her the confidence and spirit to do something different.

Hip-hop culture "pushes you to be you," Jey said. "I feel like in the pursuit of finding yourself, hip-hop helps me because that culture says, you've got to be you."

Hip-hop is, simply, "a magical art form," says Nile Rodgers, legendary musician, composer and record producer. He would know. It was his song "Good Times," with the band Chic, that was recreated to form the basis for "Rapper's Delight" all those years ago.

"The impact that it's had on the world, it really can't be quantified," Rodgers says. "You can find someone in a village that you've never been to, a country that you've never been to, and all of a sudden you hear its own local hip-hop. And you don't even know who these people are, but they've adopted it and have made it their own."

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SPOILER ALERT! JASON STATHAM JUMPS EVEN BIGGER SHARKS IN ‘MEG 2.’ (ALSO, DINOSAURS)

REVIEW

Meg 2: The Trench - Official Trailer

Meg 2: The Trench | Big-A$$ Sharks | Now Playing

Before we, ahem, dive into our review of "Meg 2," a few fun facts on the Megalodon, the titular real-life prehistoric shark, according to some unusually detailed production notes from the studio:

It weighed up to 50 tons (45 metric tons) and exceeded 60 feet (18 meters) in length. Its vertebrae were the size of a large dinner plate — no salad plates here! There's "no likelihood" that any actually survived to this day (we'd feel better with "no chance," but OK.) And, its jaw was so wide, it could swallow two adults side by side.

We know what you're thinking, and so are we: Jack and Rose could've BOTH fit into that jaw! Case closed. James Cameron, are you listening? Way to nip a controversy in the bud.

In any case, no Jack and Rose in this film, but there are plenty of other people who get swallowed, chomped on, or masticated in "Meg 2: The Trench," directed by Ben Wheatley, a film that screams: "Sequel! What do we do NOW?" And so there's more, more and more. More Megs. More problems. More ludicrous plot points, more cartoonish villains, and more dialogue cheesier than an overripened Brie wheel left out on a picnic table.

But also, in the film's saving grace, more Jason Statham, whose gruff but amiable veneer has a calming effect on the proceedings. Elsewhere, playing off other stars, Statham can seem stiff, or one-note. Here, he's in his element, and that same style is a comfort. (Then again, it could be he's the only character written with even a dollop of charisma.)

Meg 2: The Trench | BTS from the Depths

Meg 2: Just a few of my fav local spots

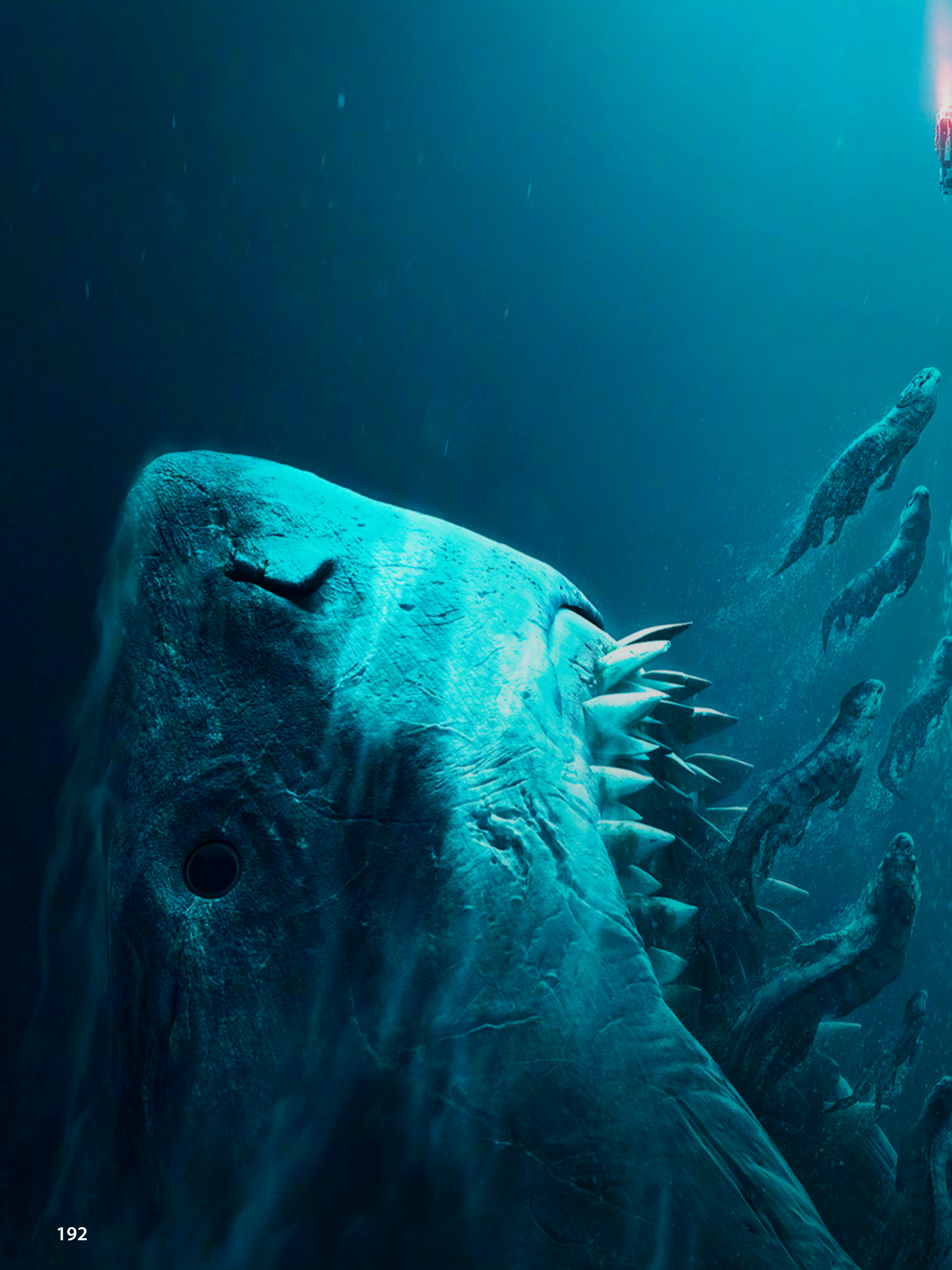
Many films begin with flashbacks — few as far back as the Cretaceous period, but that's where we start. We see first lizards, then, what, bigger lizards? No, dinosaurs! These creatures increase in heft until a huge dinosaur destroys everything in its wake. And then, out of the surf storms a Meg, to swallow up this now-puny dinosaur as if it were a mini-pack of Doritos. It's a well-deserved laugh.

We pivot to the present, where we meet Jonas Taylor (Statham), expert diver, eco-warrior and shark-battler, back doing his thing, which means escaping certain death on the high seas. Jonas no longer has his love interest from the last film, single mom Suyin Zhang, but is now parenting her 14-year-old daughter, Meiying, and that's where his heart lies.

Then there's Meiying's uncle, Jiuming Zhang (Chinese action star and filmmaker Wu Jing, joining the franchise) an adventurer who doesn't mind taking a few risks. For example, he decides to jump into the tank at his Mana One research facility to play around with the Meg they have in captivity. He almost dies in front of everyone, including Meiying, laughing off the danger.

But the danger really begins when the scientists take their two submersibles down to "the trench," 25,000 feet (7,620 meters) down to be precise, to a sector of the ocean sealed off by the thermocline, a cloud of ... oh, never mind, let's get to the sharks.

Because now the submersibles encounter more Megs. Bigger Megs. And when they get stuck down there, thanks to some dastardly villains, a mole in their own operation, a sabotaged



rescue ship and some questionable decision-making, Jonas has to improvise.

This involves the team walking (yep, walking) across the trench in EV suits quickly running out of oxygen, to get to a secret station where said villains are mining something — what, we don't know, even when Jiuming briefly explains it and says a handful is worth $1 billion. "Billion with a B?" Jonas asks, in more of that crackling dialogue.

But they make it back to the surface, because if they didn't, the final hour of this film wouldn't exist — a wacky showdown at a beach resort imaginatively called "Fun Island," full of vacationers about to be attacked not only by Megs but by ....

Dinosaurs! Yes, because of that well-known action-sequel rule: "When in doubt, add dinosaurs." (They did it in "Transformers: Age of Extinction," remember?)

So now, we have Jonas and his team battling not only Megs but dinosaurs and oh, also, we should mention, a REALLY large octopus. These tentacles show up early and often and if you ever wanted to know what happens when a giant shark meets a giant octopus, here's your chance.

At a certain point, somebody says "I just hope this goes better than last time." It's a cheeky reference to the first film, but also a rather dangerous line to include in a sequel, because they almost never go better than last time. This one doesn't either, but at least it's upfront about what it's doing: just making stuff bigger and crazier. (By the way, Jonas actually jumps a shark. On a jet ski. Bearing harpoons.)

And through it all, Statham's steady presence remains the connective tissue.

Not that you should get attached to anyone's connective tissue here.

"Meg 2: The Trench," a Warner Bros Pictures release, has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association "for action/violence, some bloody images, language and brief suggestive material." Running time: 116 mins. Two stars out of four.

MPA definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

GEORGIA KIDS WOULD NEED PARENTAL PERMISSION TO JOIN SOCIAL MEDIA IF SENATE REPUBLICANS GET THEIR WAY

JASON ANAVITARTE
SENATOR
DISTRICT 31

Georgia could join other states requiring children to have their parents' explicit permission to create social media accounts.

Two top Republicans in the Georgia state Senate — Lt. Gov. Burt Jones and Sen. Jason Anavitarte of Dallas — said in a news conference they will seek to pass such a law in 2024. The proposal could also restrict accounts on other online services.

"It's important that we empower parents," Anavitarte said. "A lot of parents don't know how to restrict content."

Anavitarte said Georgia's rules would be modeled on a law Louisiana passed this year. That measure, which takes effect in 2024, says social media services must verify an account holder's age and can't let someone younger than 18 join without parental consent.

Arkansas, Texas and Utah also passed laws this year requiring parental consent for children to use social media. Some in Congress are also proposing parental consent for minors.

California last year enacted a law requiring online services to do more to protect children's privacy and safety.

Anavitarte said he has briefly been in contact with Meta Platforms, the company that owns Facebook and Instagram. He and Jones said they would discuss plans with the social media giant.

The move comes after U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy warned in May that social media hasn't been proven to be safe for young people. Murthy called on tech companies, parents and caregivers to take "immediate action to protect kids now." He asked tech companies to

share data and increase transparency and for policymakers to regulate social media for safety the way they do car seats and baby formula.

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies already ban kids under 13 from signing up to their platforms, but children have been shown to easily evade the bans.

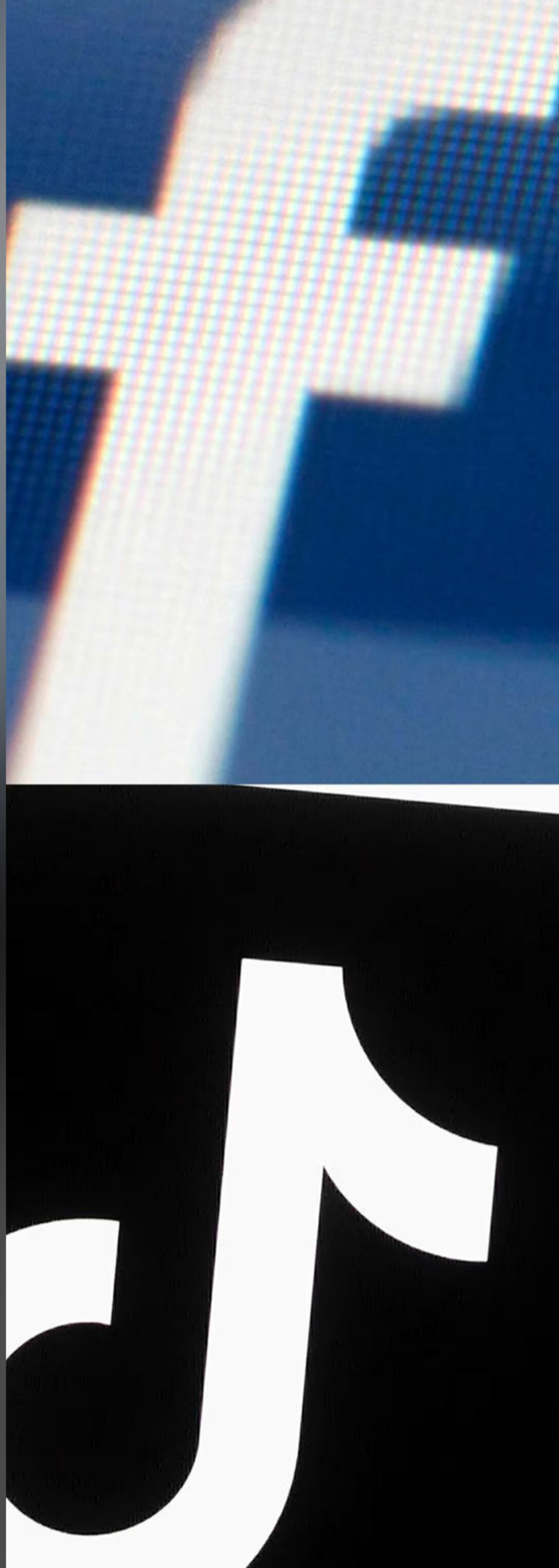
Up to 95% of teens aged 13 to 17 report using a social media platform, with more than a third saying they use them "almost constantly," the Pew Research Center found.

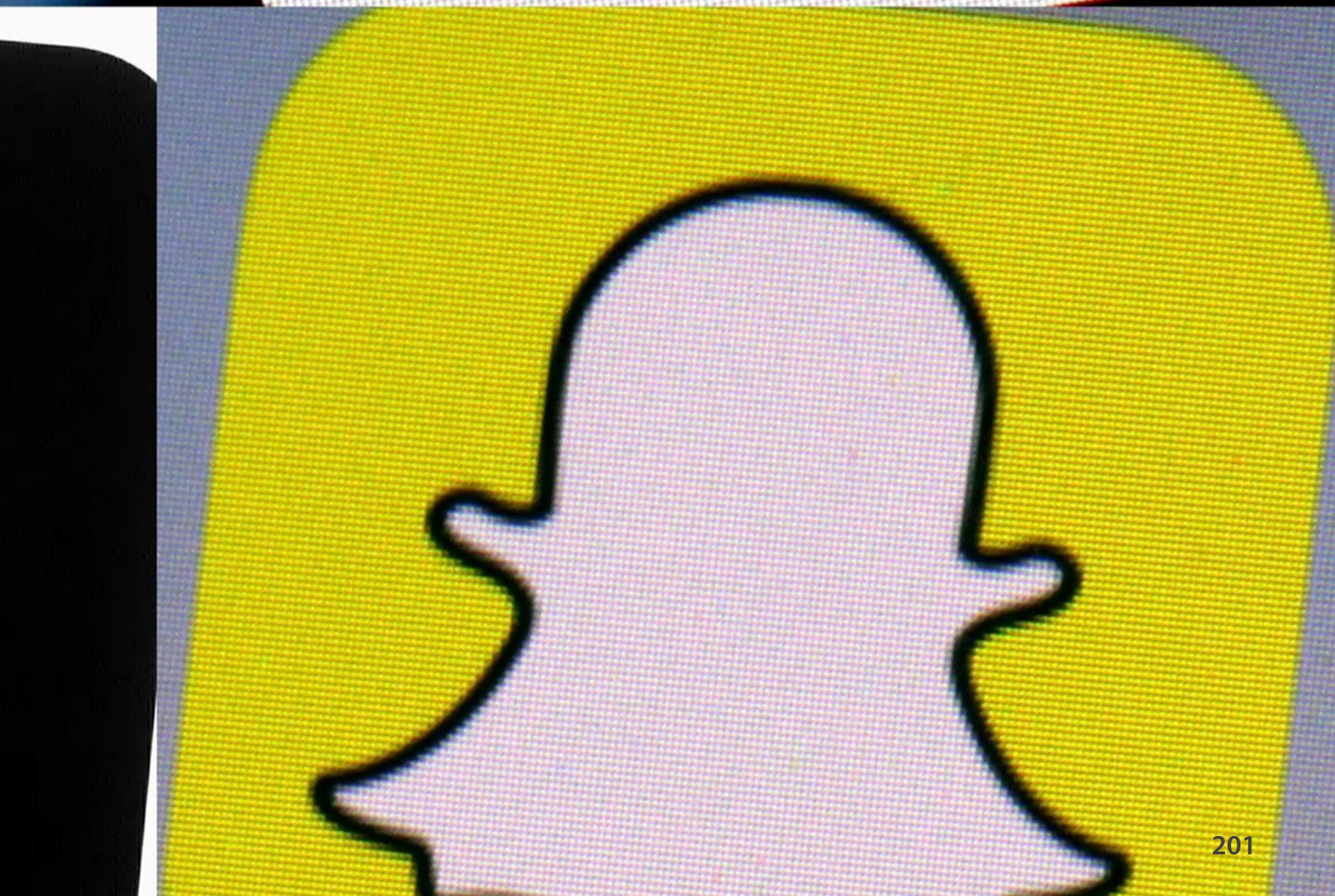
Anavitarte also said he wants to strengthen Georgia's law on cyberbullying. Existing law requires any student found to have engaged in bullying three times be sent to an alternative school. Anavitarte said he wants to revive his 2022 proposal requiring schools to warn students and parents that some acts of bullying could lead to criminal stalking penalties.

Meta announced last year that it was taking steps to verify someone's age, including letting people upload their ID or record a video selfie; and partnering with an age verification company. Meta says it provides "age-appropriate experiences" for teens 13-17 on Instagram, including preventing unwanted contact from unknown adults.

Anavitarte this year sponsored a new law that bans TikTok, Telegram, WeChat and other applications from being installed or used on state-owned computers.

Free speech advocates warn the measures could lead sites to wall off information and even make it harder for adults to reach it.

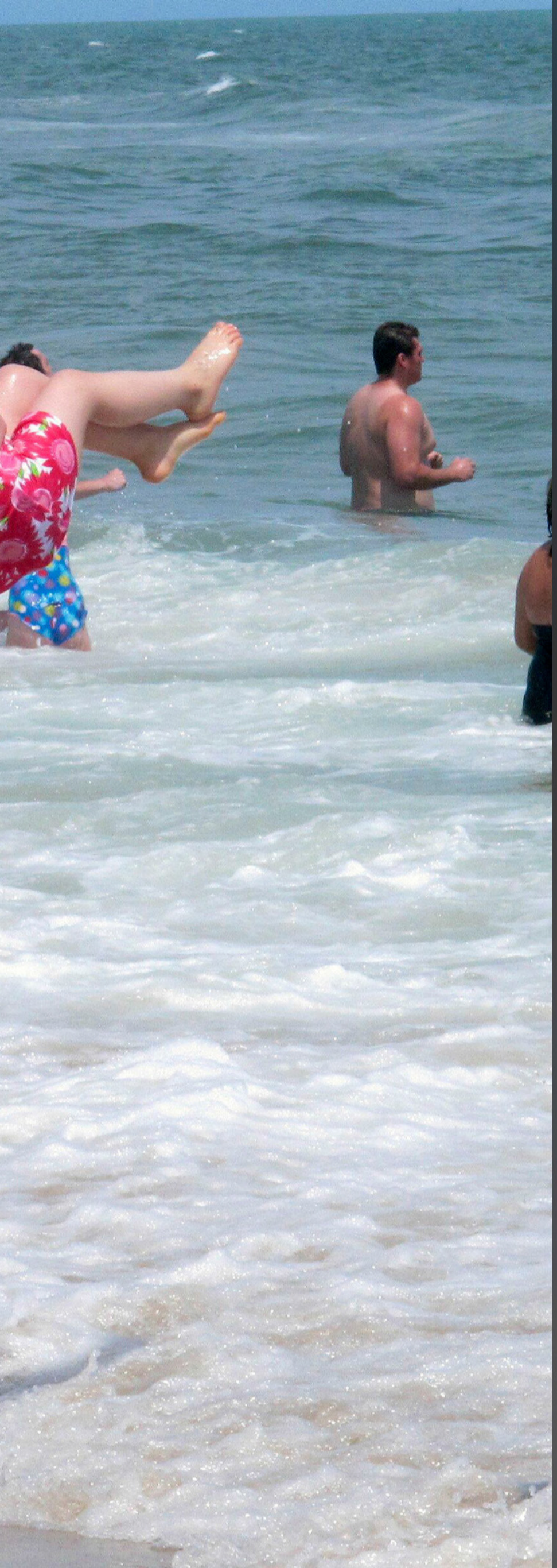




The new laws could also lead platforms to require people to use government ID to verify age.

That's already happening on some pornography sites targeted by laws in Louisiana, Utah and Virginia. The Free Speech Coalition sued Utah and Louisiana on behalf of adult entertainers, erotica authors, sex educators and casual porn viewers, saying those laws were unconstitutional because they discriminate against certain types of speech. A Utah judge dismissed the suit there last week, saying the challengers couldn't sue because of how the law is designed.

4 NEW OFFSHORE WIND POWER PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR NEW JERSEY SHORE; 2 WOULD BE FAR OUT TO SEA



Wind power developers proposed four new projects off the New Jersey Shore, a surge that would more than double the number of wind farms built off its coast if they are approved by regulators.

At least two of them are more than twice as far out to sea than others that have drawn the ire of residents who don't want to see windmills on the horizon. These two would not be visible from the beach, the companies proposing them say.

They would join three wind farms already approved by New Jersey regulators as the state races to become the East Coast capital of the fast-growing offshore wind industry.

In the first project to be made public by the companies proposing it, Essen, Germany-based RWE and New York-based National Grid applied for permission to build a wind farm in the waters off Long Beach Island. Their joint venture is called Community Offshore Wind, and it aims to generate enough electricity to power 500,000 homes.

Unlike other projects that have drawn intense opposition from homeowners in part because they are close enough to the Atlantic City and Ocean City shorelines to be seen by beachgoers, this project would be built 37 miles (59 kilometers) offshore and would not be visible from the shore, said Doug Perkins, president and project director of Community Offshore Wind.

He said the project has "the potential to transform New Jersey into a nation-leading clean energy development, training and manufacturing hub." He said his company is the second-largest wind power developer globally, following Danish wind developer Orsted.

Community Offshore said it has not yet determined how many wind turbines would be built as part of the project.

The second bid was submitted by Chicago-based Invenergy and New York-based energyRE for a project 40 miles (64 kilometers) off Long Beach Island called Leading Light Wind. It would consist of up to 100 turbines, enough to power 1 million homes.

The company is playing up its American ownership as the foreign ownership of key players in New Jersey's offshore wind industry has generated opposition in some quarters.

"Leading Light Wind is ready to build out a world-leading domestic offshore wind industry with American-led ingenuity and expertise," said Ryan Brown, energyRE's chief operating officer.

And the two companies that received approval to build the Atlantic Shores wind farm — Shell New Energies US and EDF Renewables North America — submitted a bid to build a second as yet unnamed project 10 to 20 miles (16 to 32 kilometers) offshore. The companies have lease areas in the large expanse of ocean between Atlantic City and Barnegat Light on the northern tip of Long Beach Island, but they did not specify exactly where the second project would be built.

They also did not say how many turbines it would include or how many homes its electricity could power.

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities said a fourth application had also been received, but would not release any information about it. The company or companies proposing it had not come forward publicly to discuss their plans.

Community Offshore and Leading Light said that while they plan to take advantage of existing federal tax credits, they will not seek the same sort of tax break that New Jersey recently approved for Orsted, which is being challenged in a lawsuit brought by opponents of offshore wind.

Atlantic Shores, which earlier this year indicated it wanted similar tax relief to that given Orsted, said it is not asking for anything specific from state government but is in talks with the governor's office, the utilities board and the Legislature about what might be possible.

The proposals unveiled come in addition to the three projects already approved by New Jersey regulators. Orsted is building two wind farms, called Ocean Wind I and II. And Shell New Energies US and EDF Renewables North America are partnering on the Atlantic Shores project.

SCIENTISTS LOOK BEYOND CLIMATE CHANGE AND EL NINO FOR OTHER FACTORS THAT HEAT UP EARTH

Scientists are wondering if global warming and El Nino have an accomplice in fueling this summer's record-shattering heat.

The European climate agency Copernicus reported that July was one-third of a degree Celsius (six-tenths of a degree Fahrenheit) hotter than the old record. That's a bump in heat that is so recent and so big, especially in the oceans and even more so in the North Atlantic, that scientists are split on whether something else could be at work.

Scientists agree that by far the biggest cause of the recent extreme warming is climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas that has triggered a long upward trend in temperatures. A natural El Nino, a temporary warming of parts of the Pacific that changes weather worldwide, adds a smaller boost. But some researchers say another factor must be present.

"What we are seeing is more than just El Nino on top of climate change," Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo said.

One surprising source of added warmth could be cleaner air resulting from new shipping rules. Another possible cause is 165 million tons (150 million metric tons) of water spewed into the atmosphere by a volcano. Both ideas are under investigation.

THE CLEANER AIR POSSIBILITY

Florida State University climate scientist Michael Diamond says shipping is "probably the prime suspect."

Maritime shipping has for decades used dirty fuel that gives off particles that reflect sunlight

in a process that actually cools the climate and masks some of global warming.

In 2020, international shipping rules took effect that cut as much as 80% of those cooling particles, which was a "kind of shock to the system," said atmospheric scientist Tianle Yuan of NASA and the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

The sulfur pollution used to interact with low clouds, making them brighter and more reflective, but that's not happening as much now, Yuan said. He tracked changes in clouds that were associated with shipping routes in the North Atlantic and North Pacific, both hot spots this summer.

In those spots, and to a lesser extent globally, Yuan's studies show a possible warming from the loss of sulfur pollution. And the trend is in places where it really can't be explained as easily by El Nino, he said.

"There was a cooling effect that was persistent year after year, and suddenly you remove that," Yuan said.

Diamond calculates a warming of about 0.1 degrees Celsius (0.18 degrees Fahrenheit) by midcentury from shipping regulations. The level of warming could be five to 10 times stronger in high shipping areas such as the North Atlantic.

A separate analysis by climate scientists Zeke Hausfather of Berkeley Earth and Piers Forster of the University of Leeds projected half of Diamond's estimate.

HAWKEN
MADE IN CHINA

DID THE VOLCANO DO IT?

In January 2022, the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai undersea volcano in the South Pacific blew, sending more than 165 million tons of water, which is a heat-trapping greenhouse gas as vapor, according to University of Colorado climate researcher Margot Clyne, who coordinates international computer simulations for climate impacts of the eruption.

The volcano also blasted 550,000 tons (500,000 metric tons) of sulfur dioxide into the upper atmosphere.

The amount of water "is so absolutely crazy, absolutely ginormous," said Holger Vomel, a stratospheric water vapor scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research who published a study on the potential climate effects of the eruption.

Volmer said the water vapor went too high in the atmosphere to have a noticeable effect yet, but that effects could emerge later.

A couple of studies use computer models to show a warming effect from all that water vapor. One study, which has not yet undergone the scientific gold standard of peer review, reported this week that the warming could range from as much as 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) of added warming in some places to 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) of cooling elsewhere.

But NASA atmospheric scientist Paul Newman and former NASA atmospheric scientist Mark Schoeberl said those climate models are missing a key ingredient: the cooling effect of the sulfur.

Normally huge volcanic eruptions, like 1991's Mount Pinatubo, can cool Earth temporarily with sulfur and other particles reflecting sunlight. However, Hunga Tonga spouted an unusually high amount of water and low amount of cooling sulfur.

The studies that showed warming from Hunga Tonga didn't incorporate sulfur cooling, which is hard to do, Schoeberl and Newman said. Schoeberl, now chief scientist at Science and Technology Corp. of Maryland, published a study that calculated a slight overall cooling — 0.04 degrees Celsius (0.07 degrees Fahrenheit).

Just because different computer simulations conflict with each other "that doesn't mean science is wrong," University of Colorado's Clyne said. "It just means that we haven't reached a consensus yet. We're still just figuring it out."

LESSER SUSPECTS

Lesser suspects in the search include a dearth of African dust, which cools like sulfur pollution, as well as changes in the jet stream and a slowdown in ocean currents.

Some nonscientists have looked at recent solar storms and increased sunspot activity in the sun's 11-year cycle and speculated that Earth's nearest star may be a culprit. For decades, scientists have tracked sunspots and solar storms, and they don't match warming temperatures, Berkeley Earth chief scientist Robert Rohde said.

Solar storms were stronger 20 and 30 years ago, but there is more warming now, he said.

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LOOK NO FURTHER

Still, other scientists said there's no need to look so hard. They say human-caused climate change, with an extra boost from El Nino, is enough to explain recent temperatures.

University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann estimates that about five-sixths of the recent warming is from human burning of fossil fuels, with about one-sixth due to a strong El Nino.

The fact that the world is coming out of a three-year La Nina, which suppressed global temperatures a bit, and going into a strong El Nino, which adds to them, makes the effect bigger, he said.

"Climate change and El Nino can explain it all," Imperial College of London climate scientist Friederike Otto said. "That doesn't mean other factors didn't play a role. But we should definitely expect to see this again without the other factors being present."

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CONTACTS

Executive Director - ceo@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Relationship Management - crm@techlifenewsmagazine.com
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Advertise - ads@techlifenewsmagazine.com
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Promotions - promo@techlifenewsmagazine.com

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